

Prologue

Harry Potter stood in the middle of the room his best friends, and girlfriend were in. They were in St. Mungo's. The war was over...It's been over for six days.

Ron had been seriously injured, and only just came to, the day before. He had suffered serious injuries to his lungs, ribs, and heart. No one was sure what spell was used, who used their fists, and the cast all the damages.

It took a long time to find any type of antidote for Ron.

Hermione was sitting beside Ron's bed, his hand clasped tightly in hers. Harry knew, internally, that neither of them said anything to each other about their relationship, knowing that they were afraid to lose each other. He smiled sadly at them. *'They can be together now. I'm not going to get in the way.'*

Harry watched as Ginny stood up in front of him. She kissed Harry. Harry knew he was going to have to get used to them being together again. "Be careful okay?" She demanded. Harry nodded his head.

"I've been meaning to do this for ages Ginny," He said quietly. He gripped Ginny's hands tightly in his own "Before the war...but I got caught up."

Ginny nodded her head. "I just—just want you to be careful, okay?" She asked. "I'm so scared of losing you again," She whispered quietly.

Harry nodded his head. He wrapped his arms around Ginny, and squeezed her tightly. He understood how worried they were. They weren't in danger anymore, but they were all constantly afraid of losing each other. Even if it was a quick getaway, or even leaving to the loo, they worried about each other.

Harry broke away from the hug, and smiled at Ginny. She smiled back. Then he turned to Hermione and Ron.

"You stay healthy Ron," Harry said, standing over his best friend. Ron nodded his head mutely. Harry turned to Hermione. "Hermione,"

Harry said quietly. "I'm going to be back later tonight, or tomorrow morning."

"I know!" Hermione said, her bottom lip trembling. "But I'm so worried about you Harry."

It was quiet a moment. Harry frowned. He hated making his friends worry like this. "You don't have to worry Hermione," He said. He smiled at her gently. "I'm not in *that* much danger anymore. Please don't worry."

Ron snorted. He shifted in his bed, turning on his side. "Bullocks Harry. Your words aren't going to stop her worrying." He coughed and winced slightly.

This caused Hermione to smile slightly. Harry smiled too. He gave one last look to Ginny, and then he went to the door. "I'll see you later," He said. He then turned and left. He shut the door behind him and leaned against it.

He really was going to be gone for maybe a few hours. Harry looked around the corridor. It was deserted. No Weasley's were around. Healers weren't going anywhere. Not a sound.

Harry sighed, and shoved his hands in his pockets. He walked slowly to the lift. He was glad they added a lift, because he wasn't fancying a climb on the stairs. He stepped into the lift, and when the woman asked where he wanted to go, Harry said, "The lobby."

Harry stood quietly in the lift. No one was riding with him, except an exceptionally large spider in the corner, and a few notes flying above his head.

When Harry reached the lobby, and the doors opened, he was surprised to see Luna Lovegood crying in front of the receptionist. His heart dropped low, and he left the lift.

Hearing the noise of the lift, Luna looked up. Her radish earrings swung as her head moved quickly. Then she walked towards him.

“Luna?” Harry asked, putting a hand on her shoulder. He had never seen her cry before, so he knew this had to be about Neville.

“They found him,” She said, hiccupping a moment. Harry swallowed as he felt a lump form in his throat. Through the years at Hogwarts, he had grown close to Neville.

Luna, I’m—”

“He’s alive Harry!” She said, wiping her eyes. “They found him tied up in a shed. Dead Death Eaters surrounded him, but he was alive.” She wiped her eyes again.

Harry smiled, the lump leaving his throat. “I’m happy for you Luna.”

Luna smiled, and then excused herself. Harry nodded his head. She was going to inform Neville’s grandmother.

The receptionist smiled at Harry, and Harry smiled back. He left St. Mungo’s with a little extra bounce in his step.

When he was outside of St. Mungo’s, he pulled out his wand. A few Muggles were walking passed, but they paid no heed to Harry. Harry took this for granted, and apparated to Hogsmeade.

A few older witches and wizards were milling about around Hogsmeade. The Three Broomsticks was deserted, except for Madame Rosmerta, who was cleaning it up. It had been damaged during the war.

The Hogshead was totally gone. It was destroyed and in ruins. The bartender there had died when his building collapsed. He refused to leave it.

Harry shook his head slowly, and began walking through Hogsmeade. He saw that Madame Puddifoots had not been damaged, ‘*Or whatever it was called,*’ Harry said in his head. He wouldn’t have minded if that building was gone.

Towards the end of Hogsmeade, there was a small dirt path. Harry noted it, and doubled back. ‘*There’s a flower shop someone around*

here...’ Harry thought, looking around. *‘Or there should be.’* After a few moments of looking, he found Williams Shop of Flowers. It was a small building, and Harry wasn’t surprised that he missed it.

The shop door was wide open, and an older man with a broom was sweeping dust into a dustbin. Harry stepped into the shop, and the older man looked at Harry. “Hello Mr. Potter,” He said, shaking Harry’s hand.

“Afternoon sir,”

“What can I do for ye today?” the man asked. He set aside his broom, and looked expectantly at Harry.

“I err...” Harry paused. “I need two dozen roses, red roses, if you have them sir.”

The older man nodded his head, and Harry saw him walk into a smaller room off the shop. Harry stepped towards it and peeked in. Inside the room were hundreds upon thousands of flowers, all neatly lined up upon a shelf.

The man was gone for a few moments. Harry was beginning to feel lightheaded from the scents of the flowers, so instead, he walked to the counter. On the counter was a list of prices. Harry began studying the prices, and then he began fishing out the money from his pockets.

The older man came back with the two-dozen roses. He handed them to Harry. When Harry offered him the money, the man shook his head, declining. “Mr. Potter, you saved my grandchildren from seeing a war. This time it is free, but next time, I will charge.”

Harry smiled at the old man, and thanked him. He put the money back in his pockets, and then he left the shop.

Harry remembered the small dirt path. He went to it, and took a deep breath. He began walking down it. The path was secluded, and covered by large trees. Harry stared at his feet as he walked down the path. His emotions were mixed; he didn’t know what to think.

He was going to see his parents for the first time today. He was sad, and yet he was happy and excited.

‘Am I supposed to feel this way?’ Harry thought. He continued down the path, and then he saw a fork. A sign was nailed to a tree. Harry peered closely at it. It was an ancient sign, and it needed repainted.

The Potter Cemetery

Harry was surprised. “I have my own cemetery,” He said, staring at the sign. He pulled out his wand, and pointed it at the sign. With a few quick spells, the sign looked as good as new.

Harry took the fork in the path, and there was a slight incline. Harry looked around. This area, in his opinion, was beautiful. There were trees shading the path—

Harry gasped. In front of him was the cemetery.

Right in front of him.

He stepped towards it slowly. He felt like his heart rate dropped to nothing. His heart was pounding in his ears.

Eleanor Potter

Harold Potter Sr.

Harry stared at the headstones. Those were his great-great grandparents. There were plenty of headstones in this cemetery. He looked towards the end of the line. None of the graves looked new, but there were recently placed flowers on two headstones.

Harry hurriedly walked to the headstones. His vision was beginning to get blurry, and he collapsed onto his knees.

Sitting in front of him was James Potter’s headstone.

Harry swallowed the lump that rapidly formed in his throat. He didn’t even know he was going to react this way.

He laughed nervously. "Hi Dad," He said, his voice shaking with unknown emotions. He quickly wiped his eyes. He touched the headstone, totally oblivious to his surroundings. It started to rain.

"I have a lot to talk to you about," Harry sniffed quietly. He placed half the flowers on his fathers grave. "I'm done with Hogwarts, and I was the Quidditch captain for a year. I was a good seeker. You would've been proud." Harry smiled slightly. He then turned to the headstone next to his flowers.

"And Mum," He said, placing the rest of his flowers on her plot. "I'm in love," He sniffed, feeling more tears form in his eyes. "Her name's Ginny Weasley. She's a wonderful woman." Harry took a deep breath. "The war is over," He whispered.

"Since Sirius is up there with you, tell him I miss him dearly. I've taken care of Grimmauld Place; don't worry." He sniffed. "Tell Dumbledore I found all the Hocruxes. I worked hard...I did it." He crossed his legs and sat quietly. He was thinking of what he should say next.

Suddenly a twig snapped, and Harry immediately turned around, pulling his wand from his pocket. He gripped it tightly.

There was a pop. No one appeared.

"Shite," Harry cursed quietly. He felt anger flaring within him. He didn't feel safe here anymore.

He stood up. "I'll be back," He said. He wiped off his bottom, and realized that it had been raining, but it stopped. He shivered slightly, and began walking.

He glanced at the small headstone next to his parents. He peered at it closely, because the lettering was small.

His eyes opened wide.

*Mary Anne Evans-Potter
Beloved Baby Girl of Lily Evans and James Potter
April 13, 1979 – April 17, 1979*

Harry frowned, feeling more anger surge through him. *'Why wasn't I informed of this?'* Harry asked himself. He suddenly clenched his fists, his jaw clenched.

He suddenly felt like he needed a talk with a certain Marauder.

Quickly Harry pulled out his wand, and apparated to Remus Lupin's house. Tonks was standing outside the house, her huge pregnant belly sticking out. She smiled at Harry brightly, her bubble gum pink hair sticking up in odd places. It seemed like she just woke up.

"Wotcher Harry!" She said brightly. She smiled at him kindly.

Harry forced a smile onto his face. He had forgotten about Tonks being pregnant. "Hi Tonks. Is Remus around?"

"Yeah, he just came back. He was making tea...should be in the kitchen," Tonks said. She stepped off the porch and bent over to look at her flowers that she was attempting to grow.

Harry nodded his head curtly. He walked passed Tonks and onto the porch. He opened the door and peeked in. Then he opened the door and walked in. He slammed the door behind him, cursing quietly to himself. He didn't mean to slam it, but he was just angry.

"Have a seat at the table Harry. I'll be with our tea in a moment."

Harry's mouth was agape. How'd he know he was coming? He quickly closed his mouth, and sat down at the dining room table.

Remus appeared, carrying a tray of tea and biscuits. Harry saw that he looked a little refreshed since the last time he saw him, but he had dark circles underneath his eyes.

"I need to talk to you about—"

"Mary Anne?" Remus said quietly. Harry nodded his head. His anger was slowly disappearing, as he heard the way Remus said the name. It must have been terrible for them...

"It's a long story," Remus said. "But I'll start from the beginning."

“Not when she was conceived?” Harry asked, wincing slightly. He wasn’t keen on hearing *that* part of the story. No matter how much he didn’t know the story.

Remus chuckled softly. “I don’t even know how that happened.” He shook his head. “Your mother was a peculiar person when it came to your father,” He laughed again, and offered Harry a mug of tea.

“Really?” Harry asked.

Remus nodded his head. “It began like this...”

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Chapter One: Zoom, Zoom, Zoom

James Potter ran out of Hogwarts to meet the carriages. Hopping out of the first one was Sirius Black, his best friend.

"Prongs!" he screamed, running towards him. Rain was pouring around them. Remus came out next, and finally Peter.

James grinned, and met Sirius. They hugged each other, slapping their backs. "How was your amazing summer with Evans?" Sirius called over a roar of thunder.

James shrugged his shoulders. "Stuff happened here and there," he said. He ran back to the school, the Marauders following him. He held the doors open, and let them go when Peter walked in.

"What happened between you and Evans?" Sirius asked again, when they reached the Great Hall. He plopped down on a bench and looked around. Lily was sitting towards the front of the table; Alice was sitting across from her.

James looked in the direction that Sirius was looking. Lily's eyes flickered towards him, but she immediately looked away. James did the same.

"Ooh!" Sirius said, laughing. "You and Lily?" He asked. This caught Remus's attention. He looked surprised.

"No...just one night last month," James said, looking at his hands.

"What?" Remus asked, his eyes open wide. "No...what?" He asked again.

James shook his head. "It was an accident. She hasn't talked to me since then either, so..." He ran his hand through his hair. "On another note, how was last week Moony?" he asked, thinking about Remus's transformation, and how he wasn't there to be with him.

Remus was still looking at him surprised. "Err...Uh...It was fine. My basement needs cleaned up." He paused. "So you and Evans aren't together?" he asked.

“No.” James said.

“Why?”

They all looked down the table at Peter. Then Sirius shook his head. “It’s okay Wormtail.” He patted him on the back. Peter just shrugged his shoulders.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” Alice said in hushed tones. Lily shook her head, her face as red as a tomato. Alice just shook her head. “I thought you said you hated him for being an egotistical toe rag bully or something.”

“I did!” Lily said, her eyes shifting around to make sure no one could over hear. “I don’t know how it happened—”

“Were you drinking?”

“I was not drinking!” Lily exclaimed. “It just happened.”

Alice snorted. “Something like that doesn’t just happen Lily. We’re going to have to talk about this later.”

“Please don’t tell anyone Alice,” Lily begged.

“I promise,” Alice said. “For as long as I can, at least.” She smiled cheekily at Lily, showing that she wasn’t serious about it.

Lily smiled gratefully at her. Then she slowly looked down the Gryffindor table, as if she were looking for someone. She saw the Marauders talking in hushed tones, and she blushed when she laid eyes on James. *‘This is going to be a difficult school year.’* She sighed.

Before Lily knew it, the first years were coming in. She thought they were terribly small looking, and fidgety, but she thought they looked cute. Hagrid came in behind them, towering over them. He made them look like midgets.

Lily yawned and turned towards the sorting hat. McGonagall had a long list of parchment. She began reading off the list of names. *‘Wait.’*

Lily thought alarmed. *'Did I miss the Sorting Hat's song...daydreaming about those kids...and how cute they are?'* Lily thought this a moment, not noticing the fact that the students were being sorted.

By the time she realized things were zooming passed her, the sorting was done, and McGonagall took the stool away.

Lily frowned slightly, and then she looked at Dumbledore. He was smiling broadly at the students in the Great Hall. "Good evening old and new students alike!" The hall got quiet. "I'd like to say a few things, but since I know the students are hungry, and the Marauders are quite dangerous when they are hungry, I'll keep it short.

"No. Throwing. Food." He smiled at everyone. "Dig in!"

When he lowered his hands, food appeared on the table. Lily's stomach growled loudly, and she began dishing up her food.

Alice watched Lily for a moment. She looked a little different as she was eating...because she was eating a bit more than she usually did, and she seemed unfazed by it.

'I always thought she was a bit too skinny.' Alice thought, laughing to herself.

"All you have to do is catch it on fire, and bam! A great prank."

Remus rolled his eyes at Sirius, and then turned to the tiny fragile brained first year. Sirius was great at persuading these kids. "Please don't listen to him. He is lying and trying to get you killed."

"I am not!" Sirius said. "I'm teaching them how to have fun, aren't I Prongs?"

James was shoveling food into his mouth as quickly as he could. He didn't seem to hear Sirius.

"Prongs?" Remus asked.

Peter poked James. James looked at Peter, Peter pointed to Remus. "What?" He asked, small tidbits of food falling from his mouth. He swallowed his food, and stared at Remus.

"You're really hungry."

James looked down at the small first year. He didn't even notice that he was sitting next to one. "Well kid," He began, grabbing his goblet and sipping it. "In order to grow big and strong like me, you have to eat all your food. Even your vegetables."

He smiled at the boy, and then he began eating again.

"Does he always eat that fast?" The boy asked Peter. Peter shook his head.

Soon the food was gone, and Dumbledore stood up. He smiled at the Great Hall. "I hope everyone had a good meal." He paused. "I'd like to tell the first years, and a few of our older students who never listen, that the Forbidden Forest is, as the title goes, forbidden. Our caretaker, Mr. Filch, has updated his list of banned items from the corridor. If you would like to see the list, you can just ask."

"I'd like to thank our Head Boy and Girl, Mr. James Potter and Ms. Lillian Evans, for staying and tutoring some of our younger students over the summer. They also did a fantastic job on making the occasional meal. Thank you again."

"I know you are tired," Dumbledore paused. His eyes swept over the Gryffindor table. Lily looked just about dead on her feet. He quickened his lecture. "So goodnight. Don't let the bed bugs bite, because they tend to hurt." He smiled, and sat down.

Almost immediately after Dumbledore sat down, the prefects starting showing the first years where their dormitories were.

Lily sighed and stood up. She and Alice walked to their dormitories in silence. Only a few feet in front of them were the Marauders, so Lily didn't really want to say anything.

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“Lily Evans, you are the most hypocritical person I know,” Alice said, staring at Lily. They were both on her bed, and Lily was fighting hard to not fall asleep.

“I know,” Lily said, yawning. “But that doesn’t change the relationship James and I have—”

“You had a relationship?” Alice asked.

“Well, the doomed one we had, where all we did was bicker,” Lily said. “But that’s not the point. I hate him. Nothing will change that—”

“Liar,” Alice said, opening the curtains. “And don’t tell me other wise. I’ll see you in the morning.”

Lily huffed quietly, and climbed out of Alice’s bed. She went to her own and opened the curtains. “Goodnight Alice,”

“Shut up Evans,” One of her roommates said.

Lily rolled her eyes, and closed her curtains. When she laid her head on her pillow, she almost immediately fell asleep.

Chapter Two: The Virus

Lily lay in her bed, groaning quietly. Her stomach was churning. She quickly ripped open her hangings and tumbled out of bed. She stood up and ran to the bathroom, slamming the door behind her.

Lily went to the toilet and up came everything she had for dinner. She groaned and collapsed onto her knees. She leaned her head against the bathroom tiles and felt the heat radiating off her face.

Someone knocked on the door. "Lily?"

It was Elizabeth, one of her roommates.

The door opened a crack. "Lily, are you all right in here?"

"I think I have the flu or something," Lily said.

"Oh dear...Do you need someone to walk you to the Infirmary?"

Lily shook her head. "No thank you. I'll manage."

"You sure?"

"Yeah."

The door shut, and Lily stood up. She hadn't been feeling good for a few days, and now she thought she had the stomach flu.

Lily quickly left the bathroom. She put slippers on, and a robe over her dressing gown. She heard the other girls rustling around, and Elizabeth was fixing Lily's bed and hangings. Lily smiled thankfully at her, and then she opened the door.

Lily walked down the dormitory stairs, and entered the Common Room. There were a handful of students in there, including James, Remus, and Frank Longbottom.

Lily walked passed them, and climbed through the portrait. She paused a moment, closing her eyes. She felt a little dizzy and sick to her stomach.

When she opened her eyes again, Sirius Black was standing in front of her, a concerned look on his face. "You okay Evans?" He asked. He had a rucksack with him. It looked like he had just got done doing a prank.

Lily shook her head, and tried moving away from the portrait so Sirius could climb through. She stumbled a bit. Sirius caught her with his hand, keeping her balance.

"Are you going to the Infirmary?" He asked.

Lily nodded her head. She felt like her face was burning up. "Will you walk with me?" she asked. "Make sure I don't fall over or anything."

Sirius nodded his head. He kept a good grip on Lily's arm, and he walked with her, as she shuffled her way to the Infirmary.

It was quiet as they walked. Sirius was really concerned about Lily, because she looked really ill. When they reached the Infirmary, Sirius deposited her on a bed, and then looked for Madame Pomfrey. She was in her office.

Sirius told Madame Pomfrey that Lily was there. Then he left. On his way out, he paused by the bed Lily was in.

"You have to get better Evans. We need our Head Girl, 'coz you know Prongs is gonna do something bad." He smiled at her, and she returned his smile halfheartedly. He patted her shoulder lightly, and then left.

Sirius hurried to the Gryffindor Common Room. He was a tad bit late from his portion of the prank that he had to fill out.

He stepped into the Gryffindor Common Room. James beckoned him to the couch.

"What took you?" James asked. "Did you get caught?"

"Nope," Sirius said. "Everything's in place."

“Why are you late?” Remus asked. Frank stood up and excused himself. He was a friend to the Marauders, but he never meddled in the Marauders business. It was their job. He went to go find Alice.

“I walked Evans to the Infirmary. She nearly fell over,” Sirius said. “I think she has the virus that your grandparents warned us about. It gets you all sick and achy.”

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“There’s been a virus going on, Ms. Evans,” Madame Pomfrey said. She felt Lily’s forehead. Lily nodded her head mutely. “But the only way to see if you have it, is to do some blood work.”

“That’s fine,” Lily said. She liked the Wizard way of taking out blood, rather than the Muggle way.

“Well then, you relax, and I’ll be back.”

Lily climbed into the bed. She brought the cover up to her chin, and waited a few minutes. She heard Madame Pomfrey gathering things up, and righting things.

She returned with her wand, a vial, and a piece of gauze.

Lily sat up and held out her arm. Madame Pomfrey tapped her arm with her wand, and a microscopic dot appeared. Using her wand, she retrieved some blood and put it in the vial. She put the gauze on it, and held it there for a moment. Then she removed the gauze, and told Lily that her test results should be back in a few minutes.

Lily nodded her head. She rubbed her arm a moment, and then she lay back down and pulled the blankets up to her chin. Soon she drifted off to sleep.

Madame Pomfrey was in her office for a few minutes, shuffling around papers. The vial was at St. Mungo’s getting tested, because she didn’t have the equipment here to test it.

Madame Pomfrey jumped as her fireplace lit up. Madame Jacobs, an older healer at St. Mungo's, appeared in the fire. "Poppy? Poppy dear, are you in here?"

"Yes, Madame Jacobs." Madame Pomfrey got on her knees in front of the fire. "What is it that you need?"

"The vial you sent me. I wanted to tell you the results personally," Madame Jacobs said. Madame Pomfrey nodded her head. "It was sent to me for that virus that's going on?" She asked.

"Yes, were the results positive?" Madame Pomfrey asked.

"Yes, but not in the manner you were hoping."

Madame Pomfrey gave her a confused look. "What do you mean? Do I have a dreadfully ill student on my hands?" she asked.

"Well no. It's routine now, at St. Mungo's at least, to find the cause of an illness, and Harold ran it through a pregnancy test..."

"No," Madame Pomfrey gasped. "She's pregnant?"

Madame Jacobs nodded her head. "She probably had morning sickness this morning. And when you don't get enough to eat, sometimes you can get dizzy."

Madame Pomfrey stood up. "Thank you, Madame Jacobs."

"No problem Poppy. I'll probably be seeing you soon. Oh, by the way, she's just about six weeks along." Then Madame Jacobs disappeared.

Madame Pomfrey sighed and walked out of her office. This was going to be some interesting news to share with Lily.

Madame Pomfrey saw that Lily dozed off in her bed. She grabbed a chair and pulled it up to Lily's bed. She carefully shook Lily awake.

Lily woke with a start and sat up. She blinked rapidly, and then looked at Madame Pomfrey. "Did my test results come back?" She asked.

Madame Pomfrey nodded her head. "I...Well, it's definitely not what I was expecting, Miss Evans."

Lily opened her eyes wide. "What's wrong?" She asked. Fear gripped around her heart. She felt like she couldn't breathe.

"I have been told that you do not have the virus," Madame Pomfrey said. Lily nodded her head. "But it occurred to the Healers at St. Mungo's to do some other tests. Miss Evans..." Madame Pomfrey paused. "You are pregnant."

Lily's jaw dropped, and her eyes opened wide. She stared in shock at Madame Pomfrey, her mouth opening and closing rapidly. *'That's why I've only been feeling like chucking up in the morning...and the sleeplessness, and hunger.'* Lily began to reason and accept the news.

Then Lily felt the churning in her stomach again. She threw her blankets off, and rushed from her bed to the lavatory.

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Chapter Three: All Alone

Lily lay in the Infirmary for a few days. Everyone had been in to see her, but she hid underneath her blankets, even from Alice, who came many times a day.

'What is everyone going to think of me? I'm the Head Girl, and I'm pregnant.' She sniffled quietly. All she had done for days was cry. *'Professor Dumbledore must be ashamed that he picked me...my parents; they're probably ashamed. I've been doing so well in school...how can this happen to me?'*

Lily jumped as a small weight was added to her bed. "Lily, please talk to me."

It was Alice.

"I have news," Lily mumbled from beneath the blankets.

"What?" Alice asked kindly. She gently pulled the blankets off Lily's head. Lily's eyes were shining with new tears, and her face was pale and blotchy.

"I said I have news." Lily repeated. She wiped at her eyes. Alice nodded her head.

"What news?" She asked.

Lily's bottom lip started to tremble. She licked her lips, and then sniffled. "I'm—Oh Alice!" She wrapped her arms around her, crying into her shoulder.

Alice gently patted Lily's shoulder. "I think I know what's going on," she said. "Are you going to have a baby?" Lily nodded her head into her shoulder, sniffing.

"Six weeks," Lily said. "And it makes sense," She broke away from Alice and rubbed her eyes. "It happened about six weeks ago...what am I going to do?"

Alice smiled at Lily. Lily found herself smiling back, but not as strongly. "You're going to be a good mother, and you're going to have the help of all your friends."

"What about my family? And Dumbledore?"

Lily jumped as someone cleared their throat behind her. Lily spun around, and standing behind her was Dumbledore. He had his hands in his pockets, and was bouncing on the balls of his feet.

Lily looked at Alice. She smiled and gave her a hug. Then she got up and left.

Dumbledore walked towards Lily. He sat down in the vacant chair beside Lily. Lily looked at him. She knew she must look a mess, with tearstains on her cheeks, and bed hair.

"Good morning, Miss Evans," Dumbledore said.

"Morning Sir," Lily said quietly.

"I still think you're a fantastic Head Girl. Just sometimes things happen," Dumbledore said. "But I'm sure they'll work out. Things like to do that...pop up and then work themselves out."

Lily let out a shaky laugh. Relief rushed over her, when she heard Dumbledore's small speech.

"But I do think it would be a fantastic idea to tell Mr. Potter. He does have a right to know," Dumbledore said, his eyes twinkling.

Lily gasped. "How'd you know?"

"Miss Evans, six weeks ago, Mr. Potter was the only student of age here, not counting the staff."

Lily smiled slightly. Then she reached out and hugged Dumbledore. "Thank you Professor."

Dumbledore patted Lily's back. "You're welcome Miss Evans."

Lily let go of him. She smiled at him, and then she yawned. "What time is it?" She asked.

"It's quarter after ten," Dumbledore said. He stood up. "I held a staff meeting yesterday afternoon about your condition. You have the privileges of anyone in your condition. To use the lavatory whenever you need to, or to snack in classes."

Lily nodded her head.

Moments later, Alice came back. "I went to get you clothes," She said. She handed Lily the clothes. Dumbledore excused himself, and left.

Madame Pomfrey came out of her office. "Will you be leaving today, Miss Evans?" She asked. She handed Lily a tray with food on it.

Lily nodded her head. She began devouring her food, offering some to Alice. Alice declined, and said she had to run to get to her next class.

Lily finished her food, and Madame Pomfrey took her tray. She gave Lily permission to use the lavatory in there to shower and get cleaned up.

Fifteen minutes later, Lily walked out of the bathroom. Her hair was tied in a wet bun. She left her things in Madame Pomfrey's office. A house elf would bring it to her later.

Lily traveled slowly. She had checked the time with Madame Pomfrey, and she was guessing that James was in Transfiguration.

Lily sighed and walked to McGonagall's door. She knocked on it, and waited for someone to answer.

McGonagall answered the door. She stared surprised at Lily. "How're you feeling, Evans?" She asked.

"Okay, I guess." Lily smiled at her. McGonagall smiled back.

"Will you be joining us soon?" She asked.

"I should be back tomorrow, Professor." Lily said.

"Good. I've missed you in class." McGonagall paused. "I see you're looking for Mr. Potter?" Lily nodded her head. "He'll be a moment." McGonagall shut the door. Lily stood outside for nearly a minute. And then the door opened and James appeared. He looked confused, but when he spotted Lily, he smiled.

"Hey," He said. "You're out of the Infirmary." Lily nodded her head. She began to feel nervous. "I've been worried about you," James said honestly.

Lily felt a blush creep onto her cheeks. "We need to talk James," She said quietly. She grabbed his hand, and began pulling him down the corridor. James didn't protest as she pulled him into an empty classroom.

Lily pushed him into the room, and shut the door behind her. "I think you should sit," She said, indicating one of the many desks in the room. James sat down on top of the teachers' desk. He watched as she paced in front of him. He decided not to say anything.

Lily paused in her pacing. "Do you remember what happened six weeks ago?" She asked. She peered at James closely. He nodded his head mutely. *'Wow...she remembers how many weeks it was...I must have left some impression.'* James thought. "Good." Lily continued her pacing, trying to build up her courage to say what she needed to say. *'I'm in Gryffindor for Merlin sakes!'* Lily thought, pacing.

James watched. Back and forth, back and forth, Lily walked in front of him. She suddenly stopped in front of James. "I'm pregnant." Lily decided to take the straightforward approach.

'She's pregnant...that's a surprise—She's pregnant with my baby...oh my...' James thought. He opened his mouth to say something, and then he immediately closed it. He opened it again, trying to form any type of sentence. Nothing came to mind.

"Yeah I know," Lily said, watching him try to formulate words. She swallowed hard. Her mouth had suddenly become very dry. "I just wanted you to know."

James nodded his head mutely. He couldn't bring himself to say anything. All he managed to do was pale a considerable amount of color, sweat, and lose his talent of speech.

Then Lily left the classroom. She left, leaving James all alone.

Chapter Four: Godfather

James slid off the desk and slowly opened the door. Things seemed a bit surreal to him, as he made his way down the corridor. He went back to McGonagall's classroom.

McGonagall, knowing that James was in a bit of shock, dismissed him from answering any questions. She also assigned the homework to be due on a later date.

James stared at his hand for most of the class. Sirius and Remus had exchanged glances and tried passing notes to James, but he didn't respond. He just shrugged them off, and continued to stare at his hand.

'I can't believe it...' James thought. *'I don't think she was kidding...Evans isn't that cruel...'* In the distance he heard the bell go off, dismissing class, but he couldn't will himself to move.

"Prongs, what's going on?" Sirius asked, when everyone was out of earshot, except McGonagall. She was clearing the board for her next class.

"Lily," James said. Remus and Sirius looked at each other, and then they looked back at James. They were about to ask about her, when James finished his sentence. "...is pregnant."

Sirius's mouth dropped open, as did Remus's. They stared in shock at James. Then suddenly Sirius said, "Ooh! Prongs, you're going to be a daddy!" He said gleefully. "I should go find Lily-Billy and congratulate her."

"No!" Remus and James yelled.

Sirius gave them a weird look. "Why?"

"She wasn't very happy about it," James said. "It wasn't planned or anything...nothing is ever planned anymore, is it?" James stood up and began gathering his things. They had to go to potions with Professor Slughorn now.

Sirius frowned. "She wasn't happy?"

"Think about it Padfoot. She's the Head Girl of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. She has many years of work for her at the Ministry before she gets her job career all organized. Would *you* be happy if that all had to be put aside for awhile, as you raise a child?" Remus asked.

Sirius shook his head.

James sighed and walked out of the classroom. Remus and Sirius followed. "Are you going to be okay Prongs?" Remus said when they caught up.

"Lily must be really scared," James said quietly. He adjusted his bag on his shoulders. "She's probably terrified. I wish she would talk to me."

"I wouldn't know. I've never knocked anyone up." Sirius said, shrugging his shoulders.

James gave Sirius a cross look. "Very funny Padfoot."

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"Well that definitely didn't go as planned," Lily mumbled to herself. She was sitting cross-legged on her bed. A quill and a piece of parchment were lying beside her, forgotten.

She had attempted to write a letter to her parents, but her mind kept straying to the fact that she left James all alone in that classroom. '*He probably had a lot of questions...He probably wants to talk to me.*' Lily thought. She sighed in frustration and threw her quill and parchment onto the floor.

She lay on her back and stared at her hangings. '*What in the world will my parents say?*' Lily thought. She grabbed her wand and began making sparks pop out of the end. '*Well...mum is a very understanding person...Dad will probably want to meet Jam—Potter. Unless I tell them I don't know who the father is...*' Lily sighed and rolled onto her side, dropping her wand.

'They know me better than that. Everyone knows me better than that. And Petunia...Only more proof that Muggles are better than Wizards...Ha...as if.' Lily felt her eyes droop. She tried to blink back her fatigue, but was failing miserably. She got underneath her blankets and slowly began to drift off.

Soon Lily was sleeping again.

xoXoXoXox

A few hours later, Elizabeth and Alice popped back into the room. Elizabeth shook Lily awake. "Hey Lily, Lily, wake up."

Lily's eyes snapped open. She looked up and saw Alice and Elizabeth standing over her. "It's almost time for lunch. Do you want to eat with us?"

Lily's stomach growled, and she giggled slightly. "Sure, I'm hungry!"

Lily got up, and the three of them traveled down to the Great Hall.

Lily sat down at the Gryffindor table and began dishing up food for herself. Alice and Elizabeth sat across from her, and the three of them talked quietly.

"Did you tell James?" Alice asked.

"Tell James what?" Elizabeth asked. She looked from Lily to Alice. "What don't I know?"

Lily leaned over the table and whispered to Elizabeth her new information.

Elizabeth smiled. "I thought something was up. Are you excited?"

Lily shrugged her shoulders. "I definitely haven't felt this way before. I'm scared of what people will think of me...and my parents...It wasn't planning on it. I guess it just happened..." Lily sighed. Elizabeth nodded her head in understanding.

"I think it'll be a good experience."

Lily snorted. "As if!"

The three of them broke into giggles. Then Lily looked up and saw James walk passed. His head was down, and he was walking slowly. She sighed.

Alice looked from Lily to James. "Why don't you try and talk to him again?"

"Because I don't think he wants to talk to me," Lily hissed. She buried her head in her hands and grabbed her hair.

Elizabeth shook her head. "He sure looks like he wants to talk to you." She glanced down the table at him.

Alice shook her head. "I think the two of them need to be able to accept their new conditions before they try to talk to each other."

"Probably," Elizabeth said. She smiled warmly at Lily. "Give it some time Lily,"

xoXoXoXox

"Prongs?" Sirius asked, peering at his best mate. James was staring into space, his brow furrowed, and an unidentifiable expression on his face.

"Prongs?" Remus echoed.

"What?" James snapped, looking at Sirius. Sirius flinched.

"Sorry," he said, stepping away. Remus shot James sympathetic look.

"We know you're surprised—"

"I'm not surprised. I'm bloody angry!" James screamed, causing several people in the Gryffindor Common Room to look at him weirdly. He stood up and shot them a look. They looked away. "How the bloody hell does this happen to me?" He screamed. He paced in front of the Marauders. "I'm only 17."

James stopped as he saw the red head he was rampaging about, standing at the bottom of her staircase.

When they locked eyes, she turned and ran back up the steps.

James sighed in defeat and plopped onto the couch. He put his head in his hands, and gripped his hair tightly.

“Prongs, she’s only 17 too.” Remus said quietly. “You said so yourself, she’s probably terrified. You shouldn’t be angry...not at her.”

“She heard me,” James mumbled through his hands.

“When you cool off, maybe you should go talk to her,” Sirius suggested. James nodded his head.

Remus agreed with Sirius. Then they told James that he needed to do something to let off his steam, because his emotions were mixed up. James agreed, and went and got his broom. He went to the pitch and began flying around.

Remus and Sirius shook their head at James’s antics, Sirius muttering, “That guy is too...blah.”

Remus chuckled, and then left, going to the kitchens.

Leaving Sirius alone, he smiled wickedly. *‘I’m going to be a Godfather.’*

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Chapter Five: Fixing Prongs' Stupidity

"Oh shoot," Lily said quietly. She stood in front of her mirror, trying to button her pants. They just weren't buttoning this morning. *'If I hadn't of gotten so fat,'* She thought. After a few more failed attempts at buttoning her pants, Lily gave up. She walked towards Alice, who was sitting on her bed.

"My pants don't fit," Lily said.

Elizabeth, who was sitting next to Alice, said, "Look in my trunk. I'm a wee bit bigger than you. See if any of my pants fit."

Lily gave Elizabeth a thankful smile, and then she went to her trunk. After digging around for a few moments, she found a pair of jeans she thought might fit. She stood up straight and smiled. Then she looked at Alice. "What happened to our other room mates?"

"Remember, they don't like us." Alice reminded. "They're probably sitting outside the Marauder's door, waiting for that bone."

Lily laughed, and took off her pants. She slipped on the other ones, and buttoned them easily. "A hah! I beat you today, belly." She patted her stomach and shook her head. "I'm going to be huge."

Alice laughed and stood up. "No you won't. You'll be round."

Lily and Elizabeth laughed. Then they went to breakfast.

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James sighed as he walked out of the Gryffindor Common Room. He just hung up the first sign for the Hogsmeade trip that weekend. He couldn't believe that it was October already.

James walked into the Great Hall. It seemed like everyone was in there. Remus beckoned James to him. He was smiling broadly. Sitting across from Remus was Alice and Frank. They were grinning too.

Lily was nowhere in site.

“Prongs!” Remus called happily.

“What Moony?” James sat down beside him.

“I’m in a good mood,” Remus smiled, and then began to eat his breakfast. James shook his head, and picked at what was on the table. Then he stood up abruptly.

“I’m going to go outside,” James said.

“But it’s so cold out,” Alice said.

James shrugged his shoulders. “I like the cold.”

He walked from the Gryffindor table. Halfway through the Great Hall, Sirius came in, grinning from ear to ear. He came up to James and hugged him tightly, and then he walked to the Gryffindor table, screaming, “Moo-nay!”

‘They must have been drinking or something.’ James thought to himself, shaking his head. He walked outside, and was hit in the face with cold air. He smiled; proud that he remembered his cloak.

He tightened his cloak around him, and walked towards the lake. He sat down on the grass, feeling the dew on his hands. He was sitting beneath a tree. He leaned his head back and closed his eyes.

James stretched out his legs. His knee cracked, but he didn’t mind much. His mind began drifting. He knew he was behind. They hadn’t had much quidditch practice, and just the thought of that made James sick to his stomach.

‘If only Lily would talk to me!’ James thought miserably. He saw her plenty of times during the day. In classes, during meals, just walking around, during Head duties at night.

James cringed. Lily had decided they would split up and do patrols separately.

That made James uncomfortable. He liked to know where Lily was and wasn’t. It made him feel like she was safer.

James heard someone coming near the tree. He thought it was Sirius or Remus, so he didn't move or open his eyes. He just sighed.

Lily stood a few feet away from James. She had a freshly peeled orange in her hand. She saw James come outside, as she was leaving the loo. She made a pit stop in the Great Hall to grab the orange, and then she followed James.

She heard him sigh. He sounded so sad.

Lily walked towards him. She sat down beside him, and began peeling apart her orange. "Do you want a piece?" She asked quietly.

James jumped and looked at Lily in surprise. He saw the piece of fruit she was offering him, and took it. He chewed it slowly, savoring the sharp citrus flavor.

They sat in silence for a few minutes. Then Lily leaned her head against the tree.

"I've gained some weight." Lily said quietly. James looked at her quickly. She was smiling softly at him. "I'm wearing Elizabeth's pants right now." She patted her leg, showing James the jeans.

"I guess that happens..." James said. He quickly averted his gaze, looking out into the lake.

Lily frowned. She thought they were making headway in their conversation. It was quiet for a few moments, and Lily thought, '*might as well leave.*' She was about to, when James interrupted her.

"Lily," James said quietly. She looked at him, watching as he slowly drew imaginary shapes on his legs. "I'm sorry...I guess this is all my fault isn't it?"

"What's your fault?" Lily asked. She popped another piece of orange into her mouth. '*At least we're conversing.*'

"You gaining weight and...getting morning sickness...I must really annoy you." James glanced at her through the corner of his eye. He quickly resumed looking out at the lake.

"No," Lily said. "It's just as much your fault as it is mine." She paused. "I don't really blame us either. It just happened," Lily said, shrugging her shoulders. She offered another piece of fruit to James. He took it.

James was quiet a moment. He chewed the orange piece slowly again. He was beginning to feel thirsty.

"You must not trust me," James said quietly. He didn't know why all these feelings were surfacing up now. He felt his face begin to burn, as he was blushing.

"If I didn't trust you James, then I wouldn't be in this condition."

James looked down at Lily. Her eyes were filling up with tears, but she was smiling at him broadly. James smiled back at her, and then wrapped his arms around her. He squeezed her tightly, smiling that they were now finally on talking terms.

When they broke apart, Lily's orange was smashed, her hand wet with the juice. She tossed it into the lake, and watched as the giant squid came to the surface to eat it.

Lily laughed, and then leaned her head against the tree. James smiled and did the same. They were quiet for a few moments, and then James asked, "Are you scared?"

Lily thought for a moment. Then she said, "I'm terrified," She paused to look at her hands. "I don't know what kind of mother I'll be...I'm scared that since I'm so young, the birthing process will be difficult. I'm scared of what people will think of me, like my family, and the professor's here..." Lily trailed off.

James put his hand on hers. "You'll be a great mother. Don't let anyone tell you different. I saw you with the first years over the summer. Even though they're a lot older than the baby you're going to have," Lily giggled. "They're like normal kids, and you were great with them." James paused. "I honestly have nothing against you, for being pregnant and all. The Marauders don't, and I'm assuming Alice and Elizabeth don't either. None of the professor's here seems to be giving you a hard time—"

"I know that," Lily interjected. "But I don't think it's settled on everyone, exactly what's going on. This is like the first time in Hogwarts history that a student managed to get knocked up—"

"I wouldn't say that," James said. "It sounds so demeaning...knocked up, that is."

Lily sighed. "Well, I haven't told my parents yet. And barely any students know either."

James was quiet. "I'm going to have to meet your parents, aren't I?"

Lily nodded her head. "I know you were never planning on meeting them."

"I was!" James interjected. "I was just going to wait until we were married."

"I was never going to marry you," Lily said. She looked up at James, trying to hold back her smile. She was biting her bottom lip, trying to keep her smile at bay.

James looked scandalized. "I've been following you around for seven years, and you were never planning on marrying me? Oh dear...I think I might faint." James threw a hand across his forehead, sighing dramatically.

Lily burst out laughing. Tears were coming to her eyes, and she was holding her sides, trying to keep herself together.

James laughed too.

Then he stood up. "I think it's about time we go back inside." He held his hand out for Lily. She grabbed it, and he pulled her up.

Before they dropped hands, James said, "Friends?" Lily shook his hand and smiled.

"Friends."

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“Where’s Prongs?” Sirius asked, running a hand through his wet hair.

“He’s sleeping,” Lily replied, turning the page in her Potions book. She was just about finished with her essay. It was due next Tuesday.

“Great,” Sirius said excitedly. “Moony, Wormtail, come on. I feel a little marauding is in order right now. Frank,” Sirius paused. Frank was sitting beside Peter, helping him with his Transfiguration homework. “You come along too. We need all the help we can get.”

“You should be sleeping,” Remus said. “I heard your quidditch practice was brutal today.”

Sirius shrugged his shoulders, and made a clicking noise with his tongue. “Come on!” He demanded. He watched as Peter closed his book. Remus shook his head, and stood up.

“I swear Padfoot, if this has anything to do with those girls, I’ll just go to bed.”

Sirius laughed, and pulled the Marauders up the boys dormitory staircase. Frank followed.

“Of course it’s not about them. That’s later. This one is about Prongs and his stupidity. Hurry! Before he wakes.”

Lily watched with curiosity, until they disappeared. Then she looked down at her parchment. All she needed was a closing sentence, and then she’d be finished. Quickly she jotted down the last thing, and then she closed her potions book. She quickly wrote her name at the top of her parchment.

“You going to bed?” Alice asked. Lily nodded her head.

Alice gathered up her books and parchments. Lily did the same, and then the two of them walked up the girls dormitory staircase. Alice opened the door to their dorm, and stepped in. “Jeez!” she exclaimed. The room smelled strongly of perfume and nail enamel.

Lily walked in, and immediately backed away, turning her head from the door. She felt ill just taking a small whiff of the room.

She took a deep breath, and then went into the room. She deposited her things on her bed. Her eyes began watering. She went to Alice, who was opening a window. "What's that smell?" she asked.

Alice pointed to the lavatory. Lily squinted at the door. Violet and Marie were in the bathroom. Shampoo bottles, fingernail enamel, fingernail enamel remover, and perfume bottles were scattered all around the bathroom and in the room.

Elizabeth moved her hangings and peeked out. "I've been looking for spell to take away the smell. I was afraid Lily might get si—"

Lily threw a hand against her mouth. She felt a little light headed. Immediately she left the room, and traveled to the 6th year's dorm. She rapped on the door. She heard giggling going on.

The door opened, and the 6th year looked at Lily. Immediately it got quiet when Lily appeared. They seemed to have some girls from different houses in their room.

"Uhh...I can explain—"

"Can I just use your lavatory?" Lily mumbled through her hands. The 6th nodded her head, and moved out of the way. Lily stumbled to the bathroom, and slammed the door shut.

The people flinched in the room, as they heard the sounds Lily was making. When the door opened, they flocked to her.

"Are you okay? Do you need someone to get Madame Pomfrey?"

These questions were thrown at Lily from left and right. She shook her head. "Just not feeling good today. Thank you for letting me use your lavatory. And don't worry about all this," she waved her hand around. "I didn't see any of it."

She left the room, and traveled slowly to her dormitory. When she reached the door, she could hear yelling going on. She opened the door, and saw Elizabeth in Violet's face.

They were screaming at each other, and Elizabeth's hands were clenched into a tight fist.

When Lily entered the room, they stopped.

Violet went up to Lily, and jabbed her in the chest. "Something's wrong with you Evans, with you and your friends. Why don't you just leave if you don't like the way this room is?"

Lily slapped her hand. "Don't you dare touch me," she growled. "Nothing is wrong with me or my friends, and if you have a problem with it, then why don't you just leave? Because I'm not going anywhere until your stench kills me." Lily pulled out her wand, and pointed it at the window. She flicked her wrist, and almost immediately, the window began sucking the intoxicating air out. Soon the room smelled the same as it had before. She walked to her bed. "And while I'm at it, I'm reporting this to McGonagall. You never put your hands on another student. Especially me." Lily crawled into her bed and slammed the hangings shut, leaving her friends to glare at Violet.

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"Sign your name at the bottom," Remus whispered quietly. He was trying to retain his laughter.

"M'kay," James said groggily. He put his signature on the bottom of the parchment. "Moony, 'nything else?" He asked. His eyelids were trying to stay open, and kept blinking his eyes, and leaning forward a bit.

"Nope," Sirius said. "That's it. Thank you Prongs for writing this. We really appreciate it."

"No problem Padfoot. Take care," James rolled over, and pulled the blankets over his eyes. Snores immediately took care of the silence.

Sirius, Remus, Peter, and Frank immediately left the boys dormitory. The erupted into laughter, and went to the Common Room.

"This just can't get any better."

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Chapter Six: Officially Official

“James Potter, I’m going to put this pillow on your face, and not move it, if you don’t do as I say!”

Sirius was standing over James, a pillow in his hands. James was rubbing his eyes, and attempting to reach for his glasses, but Sirius was in his way. “Padfoot, what are you talking about?” He asked, glaring at Sirius.

Sirius grinned at him. “Now that I have your attention,” He dropped the pillow. “Moony and I have been speaking, and we think it’s about time you do something that is really important.” Remus appeared in the doorway of the bathroom; he was brushing his teeth.

James rubbed his eyes again, and rolled onto his side, pulling the blankets over his head. He was not in the mood for fun and games. He stayed up late the night before doing Head duties in the corridors, and before that quidditch practice. “Can’t this wait?” He asked.

“No, because it’s almost eight; she’ll be leaving soon.”

James groaned and peeked out from beneath his blankets. “Whom are you talking about?”

“Lily,” Frank said. He just walked passed, going to the dormitory door. “She’ll be leaving in a few minutes. You better hurry your arse up!”

James glared at Sirius. “What is he going on about?”

“You taking Lily to a nice little shop, and asking her out,” Remus said, going to his bed. He plopped down and began putting on his trainers.

“You should really do it,” Peter said. He was standing by Frank, who was still in the doorway. “And you’re running out of time,” He added.

James gave Remus a really weird look. “What?” He asked, totally confused.

"I'll write it out for you," Sirius said. He pulled out his wand. In blue smoke, he spelled, '*Take Lily Evans to shop. Ask. Her. Out.*' "Is it really hard to understand it now?" Sirius asked.

"I'm not in the mood for games, you guys." James pulled the blankets back over his head.

"Prongs, you have like eleven minutes before she's gone from you forever. I saw her talking to another bloke in the corridor; that Ravenclaw guy. I heard he asked her to lunch," Sirius said, trailing off. He winked at Remus, giving him the thumbs up.

"What!" James exclaimed, throwing the blankets off his body. "She can't do that. Okay...I have to shower..." He hurriedly got out of bed, and went to his trunk, opening it and grabbing his clean clothes.

He ran to the bathroom. When the door was shut, and they heard water running for a shower, Sirius erupted into laughter. "Why does it always take jealousy to get him motivated?"

"Maybe it's because you woke him up, threatening death, and then you lie to cover up a lie that you told Lily...Who's waiting for James to take her to breakfast." Remus suggested. "I just can't believe you got him to write that note to her while he was nearly asleep," Remus laughed.

Five minutes later the bathroom door opened. James came out. He ran to his bed and searched underneath it for clean socks.

When he found a pair, he put them on, and then he put on his trainers. "Four minutes," Frank said from the doorway.

James nodded his head. He put on his glasses and grabbed his wand and cloak. Then he ran for the door. Frank left first, followed by Peter.

As they were walking to the Entrance Hall, Sirius said, "She thinks you're taking her to breakfast. That's what we told her at least."

James stopped walking. "You told her this?"

"Oh yeah," Sirius said.

“We made up the entire thing, and then you wrote a note to her, saying you were going to take her to breakfast,” Frank said. “Because nothing motivates a man like jealousy.”

James glared at the Marauders and Frank. *‘That’s why I had ink stains on my hand.’* James thought.

They reached the Entrance Hall, and Filch was checking off names on a list of parchment. Lily was nowhere in site, but Elizabeth and Alice were there.

“Where’s Lily?” Frank asked, before kissing his girlfriend.

“She said she was coming,” Elizabeth said worriedly. “You don’t think anything’s wrong, do you?” She asked.

Sirius dismissed the idea, saying, “She’s probably realizing that it was Prongs who was taking her to breakfast.” They all laughed, except James.

After waiting for a few minutes, the line began thinning for Hogsmeade. James noticed and said, “Well you guys, you might as well leave now.”

“What about you?” Remus asked.

“I’ll wait for Lily for a few more minutes,” James replied. He leaned against the wall. “Go ahead and go.”

They all said goodbye to James, and went to the line. Filch checked their names off, and then they were gone.

James sighed. There was a small pebble on the floor, so James kicked it. He watched as it bounced against the wall, and landed in the middle of the hall. For some reason, that made James think about quidditch. He knew he’d have to have more practices soon. The matches would start by the end of the month.

“Potter, you’re not going to Hogsmeade? Only one marauding the halls this afternoon,” Filch muttered, glaring at James as he walked away.

James frowned. *'Okay, Hogsmeade from the Entrance Hall is totally out of the question. Maybe we can go through a secret pass—'* James's eyes were unfocused on the corridor, but he did see a blurry red head coming towards him.

He refocused his eyes, and then looked at Lily. She was looking a bit disheveled. Her face was flushed and her hair was falling out of its ponytail. She was frowning slightly, and trying to fix her shirt.

Lily looked rather dashing, even if she looked a little disheveled.

She reached James, a little bit out of breath. She stood in front of him a moment, just breathing, before she looked up at him. James frowned. She was close to tears.

"I am so sorry," She began, her bottom lip beginning to tremble. "I didn't sleep well last night, then I woke up late, and I'm still really tired, but I was ready this morning! However before we left, I got sick." She stopped, and began playing with the hem of her shirt. "And then afterwards I had to redo my hair, and change my shirt because I spilt Violet's finger enamel on it. Why'd she leave the cap off?" Lily asked, looking at James.

James just shook his head mutely. What was he supposed to do? Offer an answer?

Lily closed her eyes, small tears escaping from the corners. She opened them again, and James's heart began to melt.

"And I was really hungry because I haven't eaten in awhile, and I was looking forward to having breakfast with you. But now we can't because I was late, and I'm feeling sick again...and...and...Oh dear," She sniffed and wiped at her eyes. "I'm just a mess this morning. I'm sorry."

James stared, unsure what he was supposed to do? *'Comfort her?'* He thought, a little hesitant on acting on it.

But when she started to cry heavily, James awkwardly wrapped his arms around her. "It's okay Lily. If you aren't feeling up to it, then we don't have to go. We can just eat here, and hang out."

“Really?” She asked, looking up at him. James nodded his head.

They broke apart, and James grabbed her hand. “Let’s go to the kitchens.”

Lily nodded her head, and the two of them walked to the kitchens. Lily swung their hands back and forth, and James couldn’t help but smile. He hadn’t seen Lily like this in a long time, and she had never been this way with him.

“So,” James said, as they reached the fruit portrait. “Have you told your parents?”

“No,” Lily said. “It seems too surreal right now. Wait until I’m showing, then I’ll tell everyone.”

James tickled the pear, and the two of them entered the kitchens. A small house elf ran up to James. “Master Potter! Master Potter! What can Zilch do for you? Where are the others?”

“Oh, they’re in Hogsmeade this morning. Zilch, this is a good friend of mine, Lily Evans.” Lily stooped down and shook her hand.

“Good morning Zilch.”

Zilch blushed and put her hands behind her back. “What can I do for Sir and Missus?”

James shrugged his shoulders. “What do you want Lily?”

Almost immediately, house elves surrounded Lily. James hadn’t seen anything like this before. They ushered her to a table, and began asking if there was anything they could do for her.

Lily gave James a peculiar look. James shrugged his shoulders and walked to the table. But before he sat down, a house elf took James’s pants leg and tugged him to the other end of the kitchens. The elf made James stoop down. It whispered in his ear, “Why didn’t you tell us that Missus Evans was having little ones?”

Before James could answer, the house elf left James. James shook his head and went to the table. He sat down across from Lily.

“What was that about?” Lily asked. A huge plate of muffins was sitting in front of her along with a pitcher and a baked potato.

James just shook his head. “Nothing,” He muttered. “Sometimes I wonder...”

Lily shrugged her shoulders, and then picked up a muffin. She bit into it, then set it aside. She picked up a fork and began eating her potato. It was plain, no butter, chives, bacon, nothing.

James began eating a muffin, and watched as Lily ate her potato. He watched in interest, because she looked totally at ease just eating it.

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“I have a Healers appointment this afternoon,” Lily said.

Lily and James were sitting in an empty classroom. James had turned around some desks and transfigured it into a couch. Lily was sitting on one side, her legs beneath her. James was sitting beside her, turned slightly so he could see her better.

“Have you been feeling ill or something?” he asked.

“No,” Lily laughed. “I have to get a check up. You can come if you want to, to meet my Healer.” Lily saw the look of uncertainty on James’s face. She patted his hand. “You don’t have to of course.”

James smiled at her. “Not today.”

Lily nodded her head in understanding. She stretched out her legs, kicking off her trainers. They landed on the floor with a soft plop. She cracked her toes, and then stared at them. “Pretty soon I won’t be able to see my feet coz I’ll be so fat.”

James was quiet. As Lily stretched her feet, he looked at her, and had the sudden urge to pull her to him, and snog her senseless. He

wasn't sure if it was because they hadn't been close like that one time in August, or because she was just Lily Evans.

Either or, James acted out on his impulses. He pulled Lily to him, and kissed her.

Lily squeaked in surprise, not prepared for the sudden kiss or the sudden movement of her flying towards him.

When they broke apart, Lily's face was flushed. She was blushing. She peered up at him, and he looked down at her.

She smiled at him, and James wrapped his arms around her. "I've been dying to do that for awhile."

Lily laughed. "Is this official now?" She asked. "Us dating at least."

"Of course; wouldn't have it any other way."

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Chapter Seven: The Compromise

'I'll never understand your cravings.' James thought, as he and the other Marauders watched Lily eat her pickles with honey mustard. Alice and Elizabeth had grown accustomed to the things Lily ate, but the Marauders hadn't.

"Do you have a problem with my breakfast?" Lily snapped, looking at James.

He looked at his plate. "No," he said quickly. He began eating his breakfast. The Marauders followed suit.

Lily glared at them, and continued eating. A few other students were watching Lily, and she was beginning to feel uncomfortable under their stares. *'If they have problems, they need to deal with it, not stare.'*

Alice tried to hide her smile, and she continued to eat her oatmeal. The owl post had come earlier that morning, and she was letting Elizabeth read her Daily Post.

Lily finished her breakfast, and stood up. "I'm going," she said simply. She didn't acknowledge anyone's answers, and she left.

When the Marauders were sure she was out of hearing distance, they heaved a sigh of relief. "What's going on with Lily?" Peter asked.

Elizabeth slid into Lily's vacant spot. "Not only are her hormones building up, but Violet and Marie are just pestering her. Recently they've decided to do their nails and spray all their perfume after Lily leaves for Head Duties, and the entire time through them, so when she comes back the room is intoxicating. Every time Lily comes into our dorm, she gets dizzy and sick just by breathing."

"It doesn't help that the spell we use to clear the air only works when there's a strong breeze outside." Alice said.

"She isn't sleeping well, and her morning sickness is getting worse." Elizabeth added.

“That isn’t healthy,” Remus said.

Alice and Elizabeth nodded their heads. “Everything we do, it just makes it worse. Lily even went to McGonagall, and McGonagall gave them detentions. That really made it worse.” Elizabeth said.

“Hmm...I wonder if—”

James stopped. Through the corner of his eye, he saw Remus put his head in his hands, and grab his hair. Sirius saw this too, because he asked him, “You okay Moony?”

“Just—I’m going to see Madame Pomfrey.” He stood up abruptly. “I’ll see you later.”

James and Sirius gave him sympathetic looks, and then they turned back to Alice and Elizabeth.

“Is he going to be okay?” Elizabeth asked.

“He’ll be fine.”

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It was late afternoon, and all the 7th year Gryffindor’s and Slytherin’s were going into McGonagall’s room for Advanced Transfiguration. Just before McGonagall shut the door, Lily slid into the classroom.

“Evans—”

“Sorry Professor, I was—”

“See me after class.”

Lily looked sadly at McGonagall, and then she went to the last empty seat next to Snape. Snape gave a disgruntled grunt at Lily’s request to sit beside him, and then he moved his things over.

The Marauders sent Snape a glare. It meant that if he did one thing to Lily, then he’d be in for it. Snape just sneered back, mouthing, *‘Why would I touch a Mudblood?’*

Luckily, Lily didn't notice, because she was close to bursting into tears.

McGonagall wrote that day's assignment on the board. "Today," she began, her voice nice and crisp, "you shall write a thirteen inch essay on Transfiguration. It is due at the end of class. The topics are on the board," McGonagall stepped out of the way. Nearly fifteen different topics were on the board. "No one at the same table shall write about the same topic." James raised his hand. "Yes Mr. Potter, you must do well on this essay, because this is going to tell me how much I need to teach before N.E.W.T.'s. Any more questions?"

James lowered his hand. He never understood how she always knew what he was going to ask.

"Good, you may begin. Keep the talking to the bare minimum." McGonagall stood at the front of her desk until she saw that all her students were working. She then sat down at her desk, and began grading parchments.

She kept an eye on the Marauders, Snape, and Lily, because she knew something might happen before class was over.

Lily bent over and began searching through her bag for a quill and parchment. She couldn't find her quill, but she did find a sugar quill at the bottom of her bag. She used that instead, and then she grabbed her parchment. Using her wand, she measured it to thirteen inches, and then she began writing.

Lily wrote silently. She concentrated on her writing, knowing that she'd have to do well if this was going to reflect anything on N.E.W.T.'s.

James picked the easiest topic he could think of: Wand movement While Transfiguring. He was done with his essay a quarter of the way through class. Sirius and Remus were close behind him.

James sighed and put his head in his hand. *'I wonder where Lily was at lunch. Probably in the kitchens...'*

"Or snogging another man in the corridor."

James jumped and looked at Sirius. He was grinning at him, while writing his name at the top of the parchment.

“What are you talking about?” James hissed.

“Prongs, mate, brother of mine, I can read your mind,” Sirius said. “Now hush, other people are trying to do their essays.” He could feel McGonagall’s stare on him.

James shook his head. He turned to Remus who was sitting on the other side of him. Remus shook his head. “Leave him be. I think he’s crazy.”

James laughed quietly.

Halfway through class, more and more people were getting done with their essays. Alice and Elizabeth were sitting in the back of the classroom in their normal seats, except Violet was sitting beside Elizabeth, instead of Lily.

“What’s going on with Evans?”

Elizabeth looked at Violet through the corner of her eye. “Nothing.”

“Yes there’s something wrong with her...Well, there’s always been something wrong with her. What disease has the Mudblood brought upon herself?” Violet said this quietly, knowing that Elizabeth would control herself in a classroom.

Elizabeth shifted slightly, and then tipped Violet’s chair, sending Violet crashing to the floor.

Everyone jumped at the loud clatter, except Alice and Elizabeth. Alice was giggling, trying to keep her eyes on her parchment.

“Talk about Lily again,” Elizabeth hissed, as McGonagall neared them.

“Violet!” McGonagall spluttered. “Try to remain in your seat. Another disruption like that will be a detention for you.”

McGonagall righted Violet's chair, and watched as Violet climbed back into her chair, rubbing her bottom.

Lily turned towards Elizabeth and Alice. She lifted an eyebrow at them, and Elizabeth just shook her head and shrugged her shoulders. Alice did the same.

Lily sighed and turned back to her essay. She was nearly finished. She glanced at her watch, and saw that class was just about over.

Lily quickly jotted down some more sentences. Then McGonagall came around and began collecting the parchments. She took Lily's, and reminded her that she needed to stay after class.

When McGonagall dismissed the class, James turned towards Lily. "Do you want me to wait for you?" He asked.

Lily was about to shake her head, but then she nodded. "Please?" She added. James smiled at her, and agreed.

He left the room and told the other Marauders that he was going to wait for Lily.

Lily stood up and went to the front of McGonagall's desk. "Professor?" she asked.

"I see you have taken a liking to nearly coming to class late," she began, looking up at Lily. With a flick of her wrist, she brought a chair up to her desk. "Have a seat," she stated.

Lily sat down. She was blushing, thinking that McGonagall was criticizing her.

"I know this year will be tough for you, so I am willing to make a compromise," McGonagall stated. She watched as Lily's brow furrowed. "You don't eat lunch before you come here, which isn't healthy." McGonagall opened one of her desk drawers.

"I know. It's just I get really tired after charms, and I need a nap, so I sleep through lunch," Lily said.

McGonagall put a tin on her desk. She took off the lid, and offered Lily a biscuit. Lily took one and nibbled on it.

"The entire staff has already spoken to Dumbledore about your condition, and it's fine with me, if you have snacks in here, since you sleep through lunch," McGonagall said. "Not a full on meal, but something to hold you over, I suppose."

Lily smiled brightly at McGonagall. "Thank your Professor!" Lily said happily, glad that McGonagall wasn't mad at her.

McGonagall offered Lily one more biscuit, which she took gladly. Then she said, "I'll write you and Potter a pass."

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"I am so sick and tired of Head Duties," Lily said, walking beside James.

He wrapped an arm around her waist and pulled her closer. "We're done for the night. And you look just about dead on your feet, so you should really go to bed."

"I'd be less tired if my roommates weren't jerks," Lily muttered angrily. She leaned her head against his shoulder and sighed.

"They're still doing all that stuff?" he asked.

"Yeah. It was worse after our classes. Violet and Marie sprayed some type of air freshener or something. It smells awful James. Alice spent nearly an hour in the Library trying to find a spell to charm it all away."

"I think we may need to have a talk with them then."

Lily shook her head. "There's no use."

The Fat Lady's portrait was nearing them. James said the password, and she swung open.

Barely anyone was in the Gryffindor Common Room. James kissed Lily before she left and went up her staircase. James went up his and walked into his dormitory.

Peter was sitting on the floor in front of his bed, shooting sparks from his wand. Remus and Frank were playing chess, and Sirius was nowhere in sight.

Remus looked up as James walked in. James deposited his robes on his bed, and then looked at the chessboard.

"Thought you were Padfoot for a second," Remus said, moving his last pawn two squares forward.

"Where'd he go?" James asked.

"The kitchens to get me a sandwich." Remus replied. James laughed, and then walked into the bathroom. He took a shower and brushed his teeth. He was planning on sleeping in since the next day was Saturday.

'Heh. It's been one week since Lily and I started dating.' James thought as he stared at his reflection. *'One heck of a week.'*

James walked out of the bathroom, and saw Remus and Frank still playing their game. But now Remus was eating a sandwich. Sirius was still nowhere in sight.

When Remus noticed that James was out of the bathroom, he offered him a roast beef sandwich with onions and salt. James declined, saying, "I just brushed my teeth." He sat down on the floor in front of his bed, and began digging underneath it. He needed to find some socks to clean. "Where's Sirius?" James asked after a moment of sock searching.

Remus shrugged his shoulders. "He went back to get butter beer. My cravings are strange this month. Butter beer and roast beef. Pretty soon I'll want pickled—"

Someone knocked on the door. It was a soft knock.

James laughed at Remus's comment, and was about to stand up, when Peter stood up. He crossed the room and opened the door.

Remus, James, and Frank tried to see who was at the door.

Peter turned around and beckoned James to come to him. James stood up and went to the door. He was thinking it was something a student needing the Head Boy, but then he saw that it was Lily. She was clad in her pajamas, and she was holding a pillow. Her hair was down, and parted in the middle.

James smiled at her. "What's up?" He asked, leaning against the doorframe.

"It's really bad in my room, and I don't want to sleep on the couch...Can I sleep in here? I can sleep on the floor or whatever, just please don't send me back to my room."

James turned towards his roommates. "Is it okay if Lily stays here for a little bit? Violet and Marie have been treating her badly."

It was quiet a moment, and then Frank looked up from the chessboard. "I speak for everyone when I say our room is your room. Just tell Sirius that there's a person of a different gender staying in here."

James turned back to Lily. She smiled at him, and James let her in. He showed her to the bed. "Under no circumstances are you going to sleep on the floor. Do you know what's on there?" James asked.

Lily laughed. She sat down on the edge of his bed, and took a deep breath. She liked the smell of the room a lot better than hers.

"Prongs, where're you going to—"

"PARTY!"

Lily jumped as Sirius barged into the room, carrying a few cases of butter beer. He stopped in the doorway when he saw Lily. "Ahem. I mean, would anyone like to have a butter beer with me?" Sirius asked.

“Padfoot, it’s too late,” James said. “And Lily is staying with us for awhile, okay?”

“That’s fine,” Sirius said. “I guess no partying tonight...whatever shall I do with all this butter beer?”

“Give it to me.” Remus held out his hand, while moving his chess piece with the other. Sirius gave him a look, but when Remus noticed that he didn’t have the butter beer in his hand, he glared at Sirius. “Now.”

“Okay, okay,” Sirius said. He handed Remus all the butter beers, and watched as Remus muttered something and took the top off a bottle.

Frank shook his head. Lily laughed and shook her head. “I didn’t know he gets that bad.”

“Shows what you know,” James said, sitting next to Lily.

Lily shook her head. Then James crawled into the bed, and Lily lay beside him.

“Look at the lovebirds!” Sirius cooed. “I think I sh—”

Frank picked up a pillow and threw it at Sirius. “Leave them alone.”

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Chapter Eight: Bulimia and Pregnancy

"It's the morning sickness," Sirius said. "That's what's getting me down."

James, Remus, and Sirius were standing outside the lavatory. Frank and Peter were already at breakfast, but Lily had been sick all morning. They had decided to stick with her until she absolutely kicked them out.

"You don't even have it," James pointed out. He knocked on the door and asked Lily if she was okay.

The door opened, and out appeared Lily. She was looking a little green. She was still in her pajamas, and she looked like she was going to get sick again.

"I think it's my roommates catching up with me," she groaned, clutching her stomach.

"But you didn't even sleep in there last night," James said. "You haven't slept in there since Friday." He saw Lily turn a darker green color, and he ushered her back into the bathroom. He shut the door with his foot, and then rushed to Lily and held back her hair.

Remus and Sirius looked at each other a moment, and then they left.

"I'll ask Madame Pomfrey if she has anything," Sirius said.

"And I'll get some saltine crackers." Remus finished. Sirius nodded his head, and they departed at the portrait.

James held Lily's hair back and she got sick again. *'How many times in one day can she do this? She'll throw up the baby while we're at it.'*

He extinguished those thoughts as Lily flushed the toilet. She stood up, and James let go of her hair.

Lily turned towards him. He thought she looked a little less green, and more pale, her normal color.

"You okay?" James asked. Lily shrugged her shoulders.

"I'm sorry. I know this wasn't how you were planning on starting your Monday..."

James shook his head and opened the bathroom door. He grabbed her hand and led her to his bed. He watched as she lay down on her side and peered at him. "I'm perfectly fine, trying to stop you from getting sick."

Lily smiled gratefully at him. Moments later Sirius and Remus returned. Sirius had a small vial, and Remus had the saltine crackers on a plate.

"Lily, my darling," Sirius began. He held out his hand, and offered Lily the small vial. "Madame Pomfrey said this would help with the morning sickness, since yours was so severe, and Moony brought you some crackers."

Lily sat up and took the vial. She knew, internally, that Sirius would never prank her in her condition, but she couldn't help but double-checking.

When Sirius heard her question, he burst out laughing. "Lily, my dove, Prongs would kill me if I did anything to you...and besides, why would I hurt you or my godson? I don't want him looking like a pelican, now do I? Take that potion so you'll feel better."

Lily nodded her head, believing Sirius, for nearly the first time. She took the cork off, and held the vial to her nose. She took a sniff, and scrunched her nose up in disgust, but drank it anyway.

"Eww..." Lily said.

"Are you going to classes?" Sirius asked.

"Of course," Lily said. She stood up and took a cracker from Remus. "I can't miss any more classes." She left the boys standing in their dormitory. She definitely left the room, still clad in her pajamas.

“Prongs, sometimes I wonder about your girlfriend,” Remus said. He ate the crackers, and then left.

“We wonder about you too.”

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Lily was standing in front of her cauldron, shifting from foot to foot. Slughorn was talking about potions, and Lily didn't want to interrupt him, but she had to go to the loo. Her stomach had been doing somersaults all morning. That potion Sirius had given her didn't work.

A few minutes later, Lily couldn't hold it anymore. She could feel the crackers churning their way up; she raised her hand, and waited patiently for him to call on her.

“Yes Lily?” he asked.

“I have to use the lavatory,” she said, her face flushing red. Everyone looked at her. Usually Slughorn would dismiss comments like this, and assign detentions for classroom interruptions.

“Go ahead,” he said.

Lily thanked him, and left.

Whispers broke out among the students. James looked around. Just because she asked to use the loo in the middle of instructions, didn't mean anything.

A moment later, Marie held up her hand. “Professor, I have to use the lavatory.”

“Why don't we take a class lavatory break?” Slughorn snapped. “Hurry back.”

Marie left. Sirius was grinning wickedly and he was stirring something into Snape's cauldron. Remus was watching with interest for a moment, before he brought his eyes back to his bubbling potion.

Marie came back, but Lily was still no where in sight. James was getting slightly nervous and he was getting a bit light headed from the aroma that was coming from his potion. It smelled like peas and strawberries.

“Great job Mr. Potter! Two points for Gryffindor. Keep up the good work.”

Remus growled. “Bloody potion, won’t work.” He hit his cauldron with his wand, and green spark erupted from both the wand and the cauldron. He glared at it.

Sirius and James exchanged glances. Then they looked at the door as Lily came back. She wasn’t looking too happy, and her face was tinged a green color. She went back to her cauldron and began working on it again.

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“What is going on with Moony?” Sirius asked, making sure no one was listening. “His hormones are more out of whack than Lily’s!”

Peter tried to stifle his laughter.

“I’m beginning to think he’s having some strange hormonal change or...or something...Maybe he’s turned into a girl!” Sirius looked around again to make sure no one was listening. “He’s craving things, and he’s being so moody. Guys just don’t do that.”

James looked up from his parchment. He was attempting to do his homework for Transfiguration. “Maybe it’s his little furry problem?”

“I don’t think so,” Sirius said. “This is more...intense. When is the full moon anyway?”

James sighed. He had forgotten about the full moon. “I think it’s in...”

“Two weeks from tomorrow,” Peter said.

“See!” Sirius exclaimed. “It’s too early for the mood swings. I think we need to have a talk with him.”

James was about to say something when the person they were talking about walked into the room, along with the person they were comparing him too. Remus was walking beside her, rubbing her back. It looked like she wasn't feeling good. Lily gave the Marauders a slight nod, acknowledging them, and then she went up the stairs to go to their room. She was going to lie down.

"Moony," Sirius said, standing up. Remus looked at Sirius.

"What?"

"Sit down. We need to have a talk. James stand up, we need to make sure he has no getaway."

Remus sat down as James stood up, arms crossed over his chest. He thought this conversation was a little more intense then it should have been. *'And besides, how can Moony change genders? To my knowledge, magic can't do everything.'*

"What do you want?" Remus said.

Sirius was quiet, as if he just thought of something. James opened his mouth to say something, when Sirius interrupted him. "Are you pregnant?"

Silence ensued for a moment. James looked at Sirius, surprised for a moment, and then he looked at Remus, horrified. It would explain the hormonal changes, the food cravings, and the sympathizing with Lily! He was going through the same thing!

"Oh my goodness," James said, "How?"

"I'm not," Remus said, trying to keep his laughter at bay. "I don't even think I can."

Sirius sighed in relief. "Then why are you so moody? The whole slapping the cauldron thing was kind of weird."

"Oh," Remus said. "It's because—"

"It's because your furry little problem isn't it?" James asked. He didn't notice that several students looked at him.

Remus looked at James, a weird expression on his face. "Furry little problem? I thought we outgrew that ages ago." James shrugged his shoulders. "Yeah, it's my furry little problem. The moon is a bit intense this month, according to Madame Pomfrey...or something of the sort. I saw her on Friday, remember?"

"That's right...Maybe it's a blue moon aga—" James stopped mid sentence. He turned his head slightly, because he just heard a sixth year say something. He listened to see if they were going to repeat themselves.

"Yeah, she's bulimic."

"A Head Girl with an eating disorder? Alice, the girl that's with Frank Longbottom, would have made a better Head Girl."

James turned his attention back to the Marauders. They were looking just as surprised as him.

"Bulimic? They couldn't have come up with a better one, like you two failing Muggle studies, because you were supposed to use some Muggle contraceptive, and prove that they were in fact, very good and that they had a low chance of pregnancy when you were using them?"

They all stared at Peter

"How long did it take you to think that up?" Sirius asked.

"What? Muggle Studies?" James asked. "I'm not even taking that class."

Peter shrugged his shoulders. "It's just random."

"We noticed."

James sighed and sat back down on the couch. "I'm just going to finish this homework assignment." He looked back at his parchment

and picked up his quill. He immediately started working on it, as if the previous conversation never happened.

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Chapter Nine: All Alone

Lily groaned quietly. She opened her eyes, and tried hard not to focus on the churning in her stomach. She heard snores in the room, but Lily didn't want to check and see who was still in the room.

She threw open the hangings and realized she was in the Marauders room. The snoring was coming from Frank.

'James is gone.' Lily thought. She stretched a moment, and then she looked at her feet. She frowned. "Do I just get bigger and bigger over night?" She asked herself. She got a grunt for a reply from Frank. She couldn't help but smile. She sat back down on the bed and looked around.

The room was very disheveled and dirty clothes lay everywhere. *'No wonder they never have clean towels. They use them all and then never wash...The house elves can't even get in here to clean and do their laundry at night...'* She kicked at a boot by James's bed. *'Isn't that Peters?'* She sighed and did another sweep of the room. It was a lot better than her previous one, even though the girl's dormitory never got this dirty.

She kicked at the boot again. A sudden thought came to her, and she looked at the closest clock. *'So what am I forgetting?'* She stared for a moment at the clock, and then she reached for her trunk and pulled it out from underneath the bed. She had shrunk it to a small size so she could put it somewhere that didn't take up space. She opened it and pulled out her calendar. She flipped through the months and stopped on today's date.

In large purple letters it said, Healers Appointment.

For a moment, Lily just stared at it. Then she looked at the clock, and then she consulted the calendar. *'Well...It started five minutes ago...'* She hurried and ran into the lavatory. She turned around and ran back to her trunk, grabbing the jeans Elizabeth had allowed her to borrow and a jumper. She ran back to the lavatory and threw her pajamas off, throwing them to the corner of the bathroom. *'I'll get that later.'* She brushed her hair into a quick pony tail, and then she was off.

Lily ran from the dorm through the Gryffindor Common Room, and to the Great Hall. She had bumped into a few people, actually knocking over a small first year. It slowed her down when she stopped and helped her up and apologized. About three minutes later she was in the Great Hall. She made a beeline towards James, seeing as how he had food on his plate. Lily hurried and ate his toast. The Marauders and Elizabeth watched as she quickly shoved the food in her mouth.

"Where are you going?" James finally asked, lifting up a goblet to her. She took it and took a large gulp.

"Healers this morning. Forgot," Lily said around her food. She hurried and drank the rest of his juice and then bounded out of the Great Hall. A few people were watching her, but she didn't care. It was already fifteen minutes into her appointment; it wasn't good that she was running late.

A moment later, she made it to the Infirmary. Madame Jacobs was already there in her blue robes. She smiled at Lily, as she slowed to halt in front of her and gulped down air. She had a stitch in her side, and that didn't help matters either.

"You didn't have to run here, I would have waited," Madame Jacobs said. Lily nodded her head, still slightly winded. Madame Jacobs led her to the last bed that had a screen around it for privacy. "I'll just be a moment," she said, going to Madame Pomfrey's office.

Lily sighed, and swung her legs back and forth, still trying to get her heart to beat at its normal rate. Madame Jacobs was talking to someone and walking towards Lily's bed, but she turned away, and began walking in a different direction. Lily tilted her head slightly and listened as she heard more footsteps. *'The Wing is pretty busy today.'*

She turned away from the screen, and leaned back into her bed. She rested her hand on her stomach, and closed her eyes. *'Why am I so nervous?'* She thought, drumming her fingers on her stomach. She answered her own question. *'Because it's the start of my second trimester and I'm not showing that much.'* She opened her eyes and stared up at the ceiling. *'I almost went to the Library to look that up. Is it normal not to show?'* She chuckled quietly to herself. *'What if*

someone saw me checking out books on pregnancy? That would be the day.' She laughed some more.

After a moment, Lily felt her eyes drooping. She tried not to fall asleep, and she didn't, as someone's voice floated to her. "Lily, are you in there?"

She jumped and looked towards the darker patch of the privacy screen. "James?" she asked, surprised.

James slid into the small area, a hand over his eyes. He peeked through to make sure she was fully clothed. *'I totally forgot that I invited him to come to my appointments!'* She slapped her forehead.

James smiled at Lily's reaction. "Is it okay that I come to these appointments with you?"

Lily nodded her head. "Yeah, that's fine. That's great actually." She smiled at him, and her smile grew bigger as he smiled back. He walked towards her, and she wrapped her arms around him, squeezing him tightly. She whispered a quick thank you before breaking away. She could hear someone's footsteps coming back to her bed.

Madame Jacobs appeared, and James shook her hand. "I'm James Potter," he said brightly.

"I've been waiting to meet you, Mr. Potter," Madame Jacobs said. She smiled at him and returned his handshake. "I'm Anita Jacobs, Lily's Healer."

James nodded his head and sat down in a vacant chair beside Lily's bed.

There was a moments silence as Madame Jacobs pulled out her clipboard. She began writing things down, and then she looked at Lily. "Lily, have you been feeling well lately?"

"I had really bad morning sickness the other day," Lily said. "But other than that, I've been feeling fine."

Madame Jacobs nodded her head and wrote it down. "Have you been running any fevers, anything odd of the sorts?" Lily shook her head, and she wrote that down too. Then she set the clipboard on Lily's bed. "First things first, you need to be weighed and measured."

James looked from Lily to Madame Jacobs. He saw that they understood what was going on, but he didn't. "Measured for what?" James blurted out. *'Okay...maybe a little more subtle on the idiocy here...can't let her Healer think that the baby is going to have my stupid genes.'* His cheeks turned a deep shade of red when he realized that Lily was laughing at him.

"To see how the baby's growing," Lily said. Her eyes were sparkling with mirth, and James couldn't help but smile. She looked so much happier than she had been lately. He nodded his head. She hopped off the bed, and Madame Jacobs flicked her wand and a Muggle scale appeared on the floor. James looked at it curiously, his head tilted to the side because he had never seen one before. He gave Lily a look, and she smiled at him again. "It's a Muggle scale. They're easier to use." James nodded his head. Lily stepped onto the scale. Madame Jacobs stood behind her, and wrote down the numbers.

James wasn't going to know how much she weighed. Lily felt that that was a bit of information that she could keep to herself.

Then Madame Jacobs pulled a tape measurer out of her robe pocket. She asked Lily to lift up her shirt, and then she measured Lily around her abdomen. James watched in interest. *'I didn't know they had to do all this. I learn new things every day.'*

She wrote down the numbers, and then Lily sat down again.

"I think you'll be more comfortable in wearing maternity shirts, pants, and bras now," Madame Jacobs said.

James blushed. *'So they do all this...but in front of me. Please sweet Merlin; don't make them start discussing things...'*

Lily glanced at James and saw the look on his face. She couldn't help but giggle and slap his arm playfully. "You said you wanted to come to my appointments now. You'll have to endure all our talk."

James just shook his head. He had this sudden feeling, and he couldn't quite explain it.

Lily rolled her eyes. Madame Jacobs put down Lily's chart. "Hold out your hands. We have to check for swelling now," she said. She also asked Lily to take off her shoes and socks. She did so, and let them clatter to the floor.

Lily held out her hands and when Madame Jacobs was done, she went to her face and feet. "Why would I be swelling up?" Lily asked, after Madame Jacobs checked and said she wasn't.

Madame Jacobs leaned against the bed. "Because you now have an expanded blood supply. It's common for your ankles and feet to swell, but if your face and hands start to swell, you need to come here *immediately*." She emphasized immediately. "Also if there's major discomfort, you should contact me or Madame Pomfrey. Actually, any discomfort. Don't be afraid to come here, even if it feels like something you can handle it, okay?"

Lily nodded her head. Madame Jacobs gave James a look to make sure he heard. He nodded his head too.

"Do you have any more questions?"

"I have one more," Lily said. Madame Jacobs listened as Lily asked, "I've been feeling a weird feeling...like I have bubbles in my stomach. It kind of reminds me of butterflies fluttering around."

"Is it in your lower abdomen?" she asked. Lily nodded her head. "That's called quickening. It's your baby moving around."

James felt another pang of—well, he wasn't sure what to call it, hit him. He shook his head again and looked at Lily. She was smiling as if Christmas had come early.

"Are those your questions?" she asked. Lily nodded. She asked James the same question and got the same response. "Okay, before this appointment is over, I need to ask James some questions. I asked Lily the same ones, it won't take long."

xoXoXoXox

By the time Lily and James left the Infirmary, James's face was so red that he thought it would never return to its original color again. Lily was beside herself with laughter.

"James they were just questions about you and your family history," Lily said, her voice a bit higher because she was trying not to laugh.

"She basically examined me with my clothes on," James retorted.

Lily shook her head and leaned it against his shoulder. James slipped his hand in hers, but he still felt a little weird. Something was nagging him in the back of his head, but he wasn't sure what it was. *'I didn't forget anything did I'*

"Are you okay?" Lily asked, suddenly serious. He had broken out in a sweat, and he was breathing quickly. It looked like he was almost running a fever.

"Fine. Just fine." He averted his eyes from hers.

Lily gave him a weird look. "Maybe you should go lay down. Are you sure you're okay?" She put her hand against his head, but he wasn't running a fever.

James nodded his head. "Fine, couldn't be better." They continued down the corridor for a few minutes, and then he suddenly let go of her hand. "You know what? I'm gonna go lay down." He didn't look at Lily when he said this, and he quickly left, leaving Lily alone in the corridor.

xoXoXoXox

Chapter Ten: Not Ready

"Hogsmeade! Hogsmeade! How I love Hogsmeade!" Sirius sang, walking into Zonkos. Following him was James and Lily. Remus and Peter were in Huneydukes.

"I can tell," Lily said, scrunching her nose up in disgust at a package of dung bombs.

"Thanks for pointing those out," Sirius said. He grabbed four packages and put them in his basket. "This is my favorite time of the month."

Lily shook her head. She glanced at James. He had been a bit cold to her since the appointment, and on the many occasions she tried to talk to him, he just blew her off.

It frustrated Lily to no end.

She readjusted the bags in her hand, and looked around. *'What is so amusing about smelly things and things that explode?'* "You know we have that class soon?" Lily asked, poking at one of the fake wands. The end of it exploded, causing a small amount of powder to pop out. Lily stepped away from it, frowning. *'See. I didn't find that amusing.'*

"Yeah," James said, sounding disinterested.

"What class?" Sirius asked, walking towards James.

"Birthing class," Lily said. She watched as James sighed and began looking at the shelves again. Lily took this time to stare at him. He looked tired and bit...tousled. His hair was messier than usual.

Sirius squealed, something that Lily was not accustomed to. He ran towards a rack, and Lily saw many vials on the rack.

"They're here!" He said.

James went to him. Lily stood back and watched as they high fived each other, and did other things that Lily shook her head at.

When they were done celebrating, they turned around. Lily was gone.

"I think she's annoyed with us." Sirius peered down several aisles, looking for her. *'Or maybe she's shopping for Christmas gifts! Oh how I love Christmas...'* He grinned broadly.

James shrugged his shoulders. "Probably," was his only comment.

"Are you okay?" Sirius asked. He stopped grinning.

"Never better," James muttered, ducking into a different aisle.

Sirius shook his head. *'I better not be like this if I ever have kids.'*

xoXoXoXox

Lily sighed and sat down at the counter at the Three Broomsticks. Students were staring at her as she walked in, because she had about five bags with her. She put the bags on the floor beside her and watched as a woman, just a little bit older than her, walk towards her.

"Lily? What can I get for you today?"

"Anything without alcohol." She put her head in her hands.

Rosmerta gave Lily a weird look, and came back with a large mug of something. Lily took one sip of it, and disliked it at once. It tasted like old tea, with salt.

But she drank it anyway.

"What's going on with you? Where are Alice and Elizabeth? The Marauders even."

Lily shrugged her shoulders. "Shopping probably."

Moments later, Alice and Elizabeth walked into the pub. They saw Lily immediately, with her high red ponytail. They walked to her, and sat down on either side of her.

"Something wrong?" Alice asked, nudging Lily in the shoulder.

"No," she paused. "Unless you count Potter being a git. Other than that, nothing is wrong."

Elizabeth gave Lily a look. "Potter? You haven't called him that in a long time."

Lily shrugged her shoulders. "It happens."

Alice took a sip out of Lily's mug. She nearly spit it back into the cup. "This is disgusting. What is it?"

Lily peered inside the cup. "Old tea with salt," She took a sip and shuddered. "I asked for anything without alcohol. This is what she gave me."

"Well, it's gross."

Elizabeth laughed, causing a small smile to appear on Lily's face. Madame Rosmerta came back and gave Elizabeth and Alice butter beers. Lily envied them, but she didn't want to drink anything with alcohol in it, even if it was buttered down.

"So what did you buy?" Elizabeth asked, peering into one of Lily's bags.

"Just maternity clothes. My clothes are getting too small," Lily said, looking at the bag Elizabeth was looking at. "They're really comfortable."

"I bet," Alice said. She took a long draught of her butter beer, and then looked at her watch. "I think we should start heading back. It's getting late."

Lily sighed. She paid for everyone's drinks and then stood up. She picked up her bags and followed Elizabeth out. Alice was tipping Rosmerta.

When they reached the outside, Lily shivered. She halfheartedly wrapped her cloak around herself a little tighter. "It's really November," Lily said, taking the first step to Hogwarts.

xoXoXoXox

James walked into his dormitory, throwing the door open. When he saw Lily sitting on the floor, folding clothes, he sighed. This caused Lily to look at him sharply.

"What's wrong with you?" Lily snapped, watching as he plopped down on his bed. He picked up a random magazine and started looking at it. He didn't answer for a few moments.

"Nothing," he finally said.

Lily rolled her eyes. "I'm not stupid, Potter." She tossed her new maternity shirt to the side and looked up at him. She had half the mind to curse him until he told her what was wrong.

"I never said you were, *Evans*," James spat back, emphasizing her last name.

"Bullocks," Lily muttered, getting another bag. She dumped the clothes out in front of her and began sorting through them.

It was quiet for a few moments, and James peered at her over his magazine. She was frowning as she folded her clothes. "What's your problem?"

Lily looked at him as if he were stupid. "I'm pregnant. That's my problem."

"Oh really?" James asked. "I had no idea. I just thought you had a wand stuck up your arse." He glared at her and then returned to his magazine. He heard Lily stand up, and felt, rather than saw, her staring at him. "What?"

"Grow up," Lily said, picking up her clothes and putting them in her trunk. "You're going to be a father soon, if you haven't noticed."

"Maybe I don't want to be a father," James said, his anger flaring. *'Where in the world does she think she could tell me how to act? I'm my own person.'*

Lily's entire body stiffened and she looked at James. She stood up, wincing slightly because she had been bent over. "What?" she asked quietly. Her voice shook with emotions she was unfamiliar with.

"That's right," James tossed aside his magazine. "Maybe I don't want to be father."

Lily's brow creased as she tried to form some type of retort. They had never treaded onto this territory before, they hadn't even rowed since they got together, and she knew the outcome of this one wasn't going to be good.

Lily felt like backing down. *'Maybe it isn't a good idea to get into it like this. This could turn out bad, and then we might not talk ever again.'* James opened his mouth to say something, but Lily interrupted him, saying, "Shut up. I don't want to hear it."

James glared at her. "That is why I'm so angry," James said, glaring at Lily. "It's what you do. How you act. Maybe I—"

"Maybe you shouldn't have *slept with me*," Lily blurted out, her voice rising. "Then maybe I wouldn't have to waste my time with you, and thinking about the baby, and wishing that we could actually get along." She was screaming at him now.

James was taken aback by her outburst, but Lily wasn't finished.

"I shouldn't have wasted my time thinking you changed!" She screamed. "You're still just a pompous egotistical toe rag who only thinks of himself. It's only about James Potter, no one else. The whole world revolves around you. You don't care about who gets hurt, who has their feelings hurt, only if it's about you."

Lily felt like punching him. Her chest was heaving as she breathed heavily.

"You have no bloody idea," James screamed back. "You have no idea who I am, what I think. You don't know me Evans."

"I can tell," Lily replied dryly. "Because if I did know you, then I wouldn't be in here arguing with you."

“You think you’re all big and bad,” James shouted. His fists were clenched and he was breathing heavily too. “You think you can just waltz up to me and—”

“Whatever Potter,” Lily shouted, turning from him. Her arms were crossed over her chest, and she was trying hard to compose herself and not lose it all together. She had never rowed with anyone like this before. “This is doomed. Everything about us is. Our friendship, relationship...Just whatever Potter...say what you like,” she choked out, trying to keep her emotions at bay.

James let out a groan and threw his hands in the air, shouting, “Un-bloody-believable.” He left the room, slamming the door behind him. He traveled quickly down the stairs, surprised to see that everything had stopped in the Common Room. Everyone was looking at him, and to his horror—

McGonagall was too.

It looked like everyone was in the Gryffindor Common Room staring at him. Even Remus and Sirius were standing with their mouths agape.

It seemed like everyone heard the row between he and Lily.

“What the bloody hell are you lot looking at?” James shouted, pushing past everyone. He heard McGonagall say something, but he didn’t care. He left the Common Room, and sprinted down the corridor, leaving everyone in the Common Room baffled.

Moments later Lily traveled down the staircase, her face red and blotchy. She kept her eyes on the ground as she walked up the girls’ dormitory staircase.

xoXoXoXox

Chapter Eleven: Grovel

Lily shuffled her way down the corridor, looking at the ground. Since the row she had with James, she hadn't felt like doing anything because she felt like someone had taken her heart and smashed it into a thousand pieces, and to make matters worse, they used a hammer to do it.

Everyone around her had tried to cheer her up. Remus had given her advice about James, which she tried to understand but couldn't, Alice had brought her breakfast in bed on a few occasions, and even Peter was feeling a little sorry and he carried her books. She didn't know why the Marauders were still *conversing* with her, even though she and James were now *officially* over.

Elizabeth had told her that after two days had passed and he hadn't apologized. He hadn't even acknowledged that they had just spent the last month or so being together. He was acting as if they were back to their love-hate relationship, except it was he who was doing the hating.

Lily sighed. It was horrible doing Head Duties separately. The last time she did this, it was her decision because she didn't know how to act around him, and now it was he who activated this decision, and it just brought her further into the dumps.

Lily looked at her watch. Duties had been over for more than ten minutes, so she decided to head back to her room. *'It wouldn't have made a difference if I didn't do the duties tonight. I didn't even try to look for anyone.'*

With a sigh, she headed back to the Gryffindor Common Room.

xoXoXoXox

James was sitting by the window in an empty classroom. His head was in his hands, and he was cursing himself quietly; he hadn't stopped doing that for hours. The Marauders had been there and gone. *'I'm such a git!'* James thought. He gripped his hair in his hands and sighed. *'I am an utter fool, a jerk. I honestly...She has to hate me now.'*

A moment later James peered out the window. Just days ago it had been the full Moon. *'How can I put Moony through this?'* James stopped, shaking his head. *'How can I put Lily through this, actually? It's more of a health hazard for her than it is for Moony, isn't it? Two lives are at stake with her. How can I take that for granted?'* He punched his knee, hoping to cause some type of answer, but it didn't.

He blinked and leaned his head against the window. It had to be late now. Everyone was probably in bed. *'She did Head Duties all alone...I didn't even attempt to leave this bloody room!'* He watched as some clouds shifted, showing more of the stars. He glared at them, and then he leaned his head against the window again. He shivered slightly. This room, of all rooms in Hogwarts, was freezing. It was as if the window was open. He hadn't been this cold in a long time. He bit his bottom lip so he wouldn't curse out loud. He was failing miserably.

James stood up abruptly. *'I have to go apologize.'* He thought. *'It's the best I can do. Maybe we can be friends after this. But I wouldn't blame her if she doesn't want to be. I mean, how many days can pass before she just gives up all together? I should have apologized immediately after it happened...'*

James cracked his back and then he walked towards the door. He peeked out into the corridor to see if any ghosts or adults were walking about. All he heard were distant cat cries. He just shrugged his shoulders and walked into the corridor. *'If I get caught, I'll say it was Head duties.'* He shut the door behind him and listened as the lock made a quiet click. *'Well, I should have my Head badge, that would be more convincing.'*

Silently James walked up the corridor. He was only one secret passageway away from the Gryffindor Common Room. He thought, as he peered around the school, that it looked eerie. There were strange shadows cast on the—

"Password?"

James jumped. He hadn't even noticed he had made it to the portrait. The Fat Lady was staring at him sleepily, and that made James envy her. She never had to worry about anything. She couldn't fight with

her significant other to the point where it hurt everyone around them, and a life was at stake. *'I hate you.'*

James mumbled the password and was surprised when the portrait swung open. He climbed into the portrait hole, and walked into the Common Room. He looked around. There was a fire in the fireplace, but it was dying. He saw that Peter was the only one in the room, and he could see that he was falling asleep. It looked like he was working on last minute work.

James walked towards him. "Oi Wormtail, you should give it a rest and go to sleep," he said while shaking Peter awake. Peter nodded his head, and wiped the drool from his chin. He asked if James was coming up, and James replied, "In a minute. I have some things to do. By the way...is Lily in our dorm?" Peter shook his head, and then gathered his books, before heading to bed.

James sighed and walked to the girl's dormitory staircase. *'Why would she be in there? She hasn't slept in there since our row.'* He put his foot on the first step, and watched as they turned into a slide. *'Well, if I walked more quickly, I probably could have gotten halfway up before it turned into a slide.'*

James backed up, and then took a running start. He ran up the slide, hanging onto the banister for support. He had only done this a few times before, and even then it seemed easier than it was now.

James took a deep breath, trying to settle his nerves. He knew now was not a good time to feel *this* feeling again. The last time he felt it, he and Lily rowed.

Finally, after a few moments of trying to keep a hold on his composure, he walked to the door for the 7th years. He slowly opened the door and peeked in, relieved to see that no one was naked. But he was saddened when he saw Lily sitting on the floor in front of the window. Her legs were flat out in front of her, and her back was against the wall. She looked at the door, as if knowing James was there.

James swallowed hard and stepped away from the door as Lily came towards it. She opened it and stepped out, gasping quietly because the cold stone floor.

They stood around in silence, neither looking at the other. After a moment Lily looked at James. James returned her look and they stared at each other for a few seconds before Lily asked, "Why?"

James was quiet, and he swallowed again. "I was scared," he finally said, rather lamely in his opinion. "I am scared."

"Well hell James," James flinched. Her voice was raw with emotion, and he could hear the pain she was carrying with her. He looked at her, seeing the new formation of tears in her eyes. He could see the pain in her eyes, and he could tell he messed up big time. "I'm scared too. I'm scared to death, but I don't go around picking fights with people."

"I know," James said, looking at the ground; he was too ashamed to look her in the face. *'How can I be scared? She's the one carrying the baby. She has the pressure to succeed in life, to be accepted, to pass school, and now she has this...baby on her hands...What the bloody hell was I afraid for...I should be scared for her...'*

Lily slowly reached out and lifted his chin with her hand, watching as his eyes searched hers. She could see what he was thinking, and it made her want to cry. She could see the fear and anxiety in his eyes, along with a billion other things.

"I'll understand if you want nothing to do with me," James said quietly. "As long as the baby is going to be taken care of. I'll pay you all the money in the world so you can take care of it...I swear Lily, if that's what you want."

Lily put her fingers against his lips, silencing him. "Let's put this behind us," she whispered softly.

"Are you sure?" James asked. "I know what I said...I take it back Lily, I really do. I want to be a father, and I want to be the father that you want me to be."

Lily nodded her head, openly crying now. James wrapped his arms around her and held her tightly. After a moment he pulled away from their embrace and kissed her quickly. He laced his fingers with hers. "I promise I will never bottle up feelings like that again." He kissed her hand. "It hurts too much when I'm done."

Lily wrapped her arms around him again, hugging him tightly. She cried for a moment, before whispering, "I promise I won't yell like that ever again."

They stood like that, holding each other, for a few minutes, and then James broke away, kissing her forehead. "Let's go lay down."

Lily smiled. "I can't get down the stairs, unless you want to stay here for the night, which is against all the rules." Her smile grew just a touch bit bigger. "I'll stay here for the night."

"Violet isn't a great person to be in the room with," James said, trying to reason with her.

"I've been up here for the passed few days, and it smells better," she paused. "Besides, my morning sickness has slowed down quite a bit." She kissed him lightly on the cheek. "I'll see you in the morning."

James smiled at her, and walked towards the slide. "Remember we have that class tomorrow morning," Lily said, watching as he was getting ready to go down the slide.

James stopped, unsure what she was talking about. He thought back quickly to any new classes he was supposed to take, and then he remembered. "What time should I be ready?" he asked, looking at her.

"Eight thirty." Lily said promptly, before going back into her room, shutting the door quietly. James smiled, and slid down the stairs, landing neatly in the Common Room. He walked to his dormitory, trying to keep his smile at bay. *'Apologizing was a lot easier than I thought. I could have groveled at her feet some.'*

He stopped suddenly when he sneezed in front of the staircase. As he was going up the stairs he sneezed two more times. "I cannot be getting sick," he mumbled opening his bedroom door. *'I have things to*

do tomorrow.’ He wasn’t smiling anymore as he sneezed a few more times while putting on his pajamas. If he continued sneezing like he was, he’d wake up the other Marauders.

With a sigh, he crawled into bed, sneezing himself to sleep.

xoXoXoXox

Chapter Twelve: Hormones

Lily tapped her foot patiently, checking the clock in the Gryffindor Common Room. *'We still have twenty five minutes to walk there. No hurry. Just wanted to get there early so I could meet the instructor...no worry.'* Lily averted her eyes, as a few students stared at her. *'Maybe I should just go up there.'* Lily thought. She walked up the boys' dormitory staircase and went to the 7th years dorm. She knocked on the door, but no one answered, so she opened it. *'Maybe he's at breakfast already, and I'm the one who's late.'*

She stepped into the room, and was surprised to hear snoring. Remus and Frank's hangings were open and no one was in the lavatory. She stepped towards James's bed, and accidentally knocked over an empty bucket.

She glared at him, and was about to shake him awake, when she noticed that he was sweating slightly, but he was wrapped tightly in his blankets. She sat down on the edge of the bed, and lightly pressed the back of her hand against his forehead.

He was burning up.

"James?" Lily said softly. She shook him, and watched as his eyelids fluttered open. *'How in the world did he get so sick so fast?'*

"You shouldn't touch me," James said, gently pushing her away. "I'll get you sick, and then we'll both be infected."

"I don't want to go alone," Lily said. She sighed and looked at James again. He was rapidly blinking his eyes, trying to stay awake. Lily lightly pushed the hair away from his eyes. "Were you up all night?" she asked.

James nodded his head. He looked sadly at Lily. "I'm sorry I can't go. Are you still going to go?"

Lily nodded her head. "I guess I will." She was quiet for a few moments, absentmindedly smoothing out James's hair. Then she

noticed that he was sleeping, quiet snores escaping him. She smiled and looked around the room. Only Sirius was left...

Lily stood up and walked to Sirius's bed. She sat down on the edge, and shook him awake. "Sirius!"

Sirius opened his eyes and stared tiredly at Lily. "Morning Love. I don't think we should do anything...Prongs is just one bed away...He'd be bound to hear—"

"Shut up, and get ready. You're coming with me." Lily smiled as Sirius tried to register where they were going. Then he remembered the whole birthing class thing, and he looked scared.

"Lily...I don't think it's appropriate for me to go. I mean, Prongs is a jerk sometimes, but you need to work things out before coming to me."

"We worked things out last night, but he's sick. Just come on...For me and the baby," Lily gave Sirius the saddest look she could muster. Sirius sighed and sat up.

"Give me a moment." he said, getting out of bed. Lily watched as he scrambled around trying to find a towel for a shower.

Ten minutes later, Lily and Sirius were heading to Hogsmeade, Sirius a bit nervous, and Lily a bit hungry. The class started in ten minutes, so Lily knew she wasn't going to have enough time to eat anything until after the class.

Sirius twirled his wand between his fingers. "Do you want to get something to eat after this? I'm starving."

Lily nodded her head. "I'm famished. I want a real breakfast too...with eggs and hot cakes and bacon and home fries..." Lily licked her lips, and then her stomach growled, causing her to erupt into giggles.

Sirius smiled. *'James was right. She does look adorable when she gets excited.'*

They reached the building, and Lily opened the door, holding it open for Sirius. She saw a welcome desk and Lily walked towards it. A man in blue robes was standing behind it, talking to a woman. Lily cleared her throat to get his attention.

The man smiled at Lily. "Good morning, are you here for our morning session, or to make an appointment?"

"The morning session," Lily replied.

"And is this..."

Sirius held out his hand. "Sirius Black. I'm a friend of hers and her boyfriend."

"Ahh..." the man said, eyeing them carefully. Lily wasn't sure if she liked that look. *'As if I have a secret...oh wait! I remember, the one where I cheated on James and I am now carrying Sirius's baby, and I want Sirius to be the father, not James. I forgot about that one.'* Lily thought sarcastically. "You can just come in through that door. We have a few more minutes before we start."

Lily nodded her head. Sirius followed her as they walked into the room. There was carpet on the floor, and mats were on the floor as well. A few handfuls of pregnant women were there with their partners, and another handful of women were alone.

"I've never seen so many pregnant people before," Sirius commented, following Lily to a mat. Most of the women were sitting on the floor. Sirius sat down first, and then watched as Lily sat down beside him. Her legs were straight out on front of her, and Lily made imaginary shapes on her pants.

"I'm really hungry," Lily said.

"I am too," Sirius said. "Do you want to skiv off and go to breakfast?"

"Can't," Lily said. "I already paid for this first session." She smiled as Sirius shook his head.

"Down payments on classes like this? You're nutters Lily."

"I'm not nutters! I'm a woman who is in her second trimester of pregnancy, a few weeks into it to be precise, and I need to take these classes! I wasn't happy to hear that I had to have down payments either, so be quiet." Lily smiled at Sirius as she finished her tirade.

Moments later the man in blue robes came into the room shutting the door behind him. That's when Sirius noticed that the man looked a bit weird. He immediately began to dislike him, and scooted somewhat closer to Lily. She didn't notice, because he was talking, and she was listening.

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I would like to start by doing some normal breathing exercises." He paused, looking at all the people. "Great, all of you are on mats. Now what I want you to do is take a deep breath and exhale slowly."

Lily did as she was told, and Sirius watched. Soon they were doing a bit more of the breathing, and he was beginning to get bored when they switched activities. The man in the blue robes (Sirius didn't catch his name) was walking around the room, correcting any problems and helping some of the women who were alone.

Soon the breathing exercises were over, and Sirius was relieved. They were kind of boring.

"Now regular exercises are good too. Make sure you get in a little walking every day." The man said, pausing in front of Lily and Sirius.

"Next we're going to have a visitor come in to tell you about the things you'll be learning. I'd like everyone to stand up and stretch. It'll be a few moments." He smiled down at Lily.

Lily ignored him and looked around. The woman next to her was having trouble standing up, and she was all alone.

"Do you need help?" Lily asked, ignoring the looks that the man was giving her. Lily thought he was a Healer because his blue robes. They were like Madame Jacobs.

"If you wouldn't mind..." The woman said rather helplessly. Lily nudged Sirius to help her. Sirius did as he was told and went to the

woman. He helped her stand up, and made sure she was steady on her feet. Then he handed her her sweater and purse. "Thank you."

"No problem," Sirius said, smiling.

The woman gave Sirius a weird look, and then she gasped. Sirius, thinking he did something wrong, turned around. He was surprised at what he saw.

Lily was standing up, her face flushed. Her wand was pointing at the Healer, and he wasn't smiling anymore. He had a bruise on his face, or at least it was forming. Lily hissed something at him, and then she left.

"Oh dear. You might want to catch your friend," The woman who Sirius helped up said. "And I'll take care of this fellow. He shouldn't have done what he did,"

Sirius nodded his head quickly, and then sprinted from the room. He saw Lily leaving, her cloak wrapped around her tightly. It didn't take long for him to catch up.

"Lily, what happened?" Sirius asked when she stopped. Her face was still red, but now it was from the cold, instead of from her fury.

"That man makes me uncomfortable. That's all." Lily said quickly. Sirius nodded his head, knowing that maybe he didn't need to know why he made her uncomfortable. They were still standing where they had stopped, and Sirius was about to suggest that they go get breakfast when Lily said, "I'm not that hungry anymore. I think I'm going to head back to Hogwarts." Lily looked sheepishly at Sirius. Her face was flushed. Sirius felt the sudden urge to go back and see exactly what that healer did.

They walked in an uncomfortable silence all the way back to Hogwarts. Sirius held the door open for Lily, and watched as she walked in first.

They were standing in front of the Great Hall, when Peter appeared. It seemed like he was heading to the Library, because he had his bag with him.

“Prongs is in the Infirmary, just to let you know.”

Lily nodded her head, and then she separated from Sirius. She walked slowly to the Infirmary, her mind reeling with that day’s happenings.

When she reached the Infirmary, the door was open, and she saw James lying in a bed, the blankets pulled up to his chin. His glasses were on the small table beside him, along with a few magazines. Lily thought he was asleep as she looked at him from the doorway, but then she noticed that he was blinking, but wasn’t looking directly at her. He was staring off into space.

“James?” Lily asked tentatively. She watched as he looked at her.

“Hey! I thought you weren’t going to be back until later,” James said.

Lily walked to him, and crawled into his bed. She laid her head on his chest. James was surprised. He wasn’t expecting this type of reaction from her. He slowly ran his hand through her hair. “What happened?”

“The Healer...or whatever he was,” Lily sniffled quietly, “kept giving me weird looks, and then when Sirius went to help this other woman, he hit on me, putting his hand on my knee. He acted as if Sirius didn’t exist or something. I cursed him to the floor and ran away.”

James frowned. Usually this type of flirting didn’t cause Lily to have a total breakdown but—‘*Ahh...the hormones.*’ “You don’t have to go back if you don’t want to,” James said soothingly. “I’m sure Madame Jacobs can help you with anything you need.”

“I know...but still...” Lily said, sighing. “Are you feeling better? You sound a lot better.”

“Yeah. Madame Pomfrey fixed me up real quick, but she’s insisting that I stay here.”

“I don’t blame her. You were absolutely awful this morning,” Lily said. “That’s why I asked Sirius.”

James shook his head, but didn't say anything. But moments later, he realized that Lily had fallen asleep. He smiled and shifted, before falling asleep too.

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Lily was sitting on the floor, her back to James's bed. A large pile of towels and socks was in front of her, and she was slowly folding them.

Frank walked into the room, carrying a book with him. He paused in the doorway, and watched as Lily folded the towels and socks. Lily didn't notice his presence and she whistled quietly to herself. She was doing a slight dance as she folded and whistled.

"What are you doing?"

Lily jumped, her eyes opening wide. "I didn't even know you were in here," she said, her hand on her chest. She took a deep breath, and then smiled. "I'm folding your socks and towels."

Frank smiled and sat down on his bed. "Why?"

"I've noticed that all of you are scrambling for socks before classes, and when you do shower," Lily giggled, seeing Frank's face, "you never have towels. I've taken the liberty of finding them, which was pretty difficult I might add, and washing them."

Frank laughed. "Well thank you Lily. I'm sure we'll appreciate this kind thing you have done for us."

Lily laughed. "No problem." She continued folding until everything was folded. She looked around the room, and saw that Frank was lying in his bed, reading his book. *'Probably about Herbology.'* Lily thought. She looked around again, and saw that James's trunk was close by. She gripped it, and tried pulling herself up, when she stopped. "Oh dear," she gasped, as a spasm went through her back.

"You okay?" Frank asked.

Lily shook her head, and struggled the rest of the way to her feet. "Yeah, fine."

Frank closed his book. "Are you sure?"

Lily nodded her head. "Perfectly fine." She bent down and closed her eyes, as another spasm went through her back. It was a sharp pain, rocking her to the core. She hurriedly gathered an armful of towels and stood back up. She walked towards the bathroom, and put them away in the cupboard.

She turned around, and Frank was standing behind her, holding the rest of the towels. "I got it. Just go sit down."

"I can do it," Lily retorted, her eyes narrowing.

"I know you can," Frank said. He squeezed passed her and put the towels away.

Lily sighed and sat down on James's bed. She stared at the socks. Everyone in the room had put their names on their socks so no one would take other peoples socks. Lily was glad, because now it was easier to sort through them. Using her wand, she pointed at one pile of socks. It was the one for Remus. She flicked her wrist, and they floated in the air and to Remus's bed. She did the same with the rest of the socks, and picked up James's socks herself and put them on the bed.

Frank left the bathroom and sat down on his bed. "I having nothing against you Lily but—"

"I know," Lily said, lying on James's bed. She stared at the hangings. "I shouldn't be straining myself."

It was quiet. Frank stared helplessly at Lily, unsure if he was in trouble or not. A few more minutes passed in silence, and then Frank noticed that Lily was sleeping.

Thinking that this was a good idea, he left, going to find James. *'He needs to know...I hope.'*

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Chapter Thirteen: Barmy

"I'm fine!" Lily hissed. She felt like this was the billionth time she answered this question. They were sitting in McGonagall's classroom, and she was sitting with Elizabeth and Alice. A half eaten banana was sitting in front of her. She was staring at it, hoping that this would stop her from seeing Alice and Elizabeth's exasperated looks.

"Lily, we know you're not. It's been weeks since this started. It's almost Christmas break," Alice retorted. "You can tell us if something is wrong."

'I don't want to worry you.' Lily thought. She picked up her discarded quill and began rereading the answers to her test questions. Class was nearly over, and Lily did not want to have this conversation with them *again*.

Elizabeth gave Alice a cross look. "Lily," she hissed.

A bell rang, and all quills were dropped. McGonagall came around and collected the tests. Lily took this time to unpeel the rest of her banana and eat it. She got a weird stare from Violet. Lily shook her head. *'How can they not tell I'm pregnant? I'm huge.'*

McGonagall picked up Lily's test. She was the last person to have hers collected. She sighed and took a bite of her banana.

When McGonagall returned to the front of her desk, she looked at her class. "Attention everyone! That means you too, Black."

Sirius looked up from the conversation he was having with Remus.

"Since today is the last time I will actually teach you before you leave for break, I would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and Happy New Year." Her eyes traveled over everyone in the class.

Everyone was giving her weird looks. They had a few days before break actually started.

McGonagall smiled. "Professor Dumbledore has decided to give everyone, from today...right now, no classes. Why, I have no idea, but you won't be taught by anyone until after break."

Sirius jumped into the air, fists above his head, screaming and dancing. "Yes! No Binns! No Slughorn! Yes!" He danced for a few more seconds, and then he sat down.

The corner of McGonagall's mouth was twitching, as if she were resisting the urge to laugh. "Black, I'd appreciate it if there were no more outbursts like that in my classroom."

"No problem Minnie," Sirius said. He began laughing, along with the rest of the Marauders.

McGonagall gave him a look. He stopped laughing, but James and Remus laughed at him.

A few minutes later, the bell rang. All the students began to get up and leave, except Lily. Another spasm had gone through her back, and she was trying to ignore it as she ate the rest of her banana.

"Are you going to stay here for the rest of the day?" Alice asked.

"No." Lily rolled her eyes. She picked up her bag, and stood up. She winced as she shouldered it.

Alice stood behind Lily. "You need to go to Madame Pomfrey if your back is hurting that bad Lily."

"I'm fine," Lily said. She walked out of the classroom, and was met with the Marauders. Peter was there too, and they were talking in hushed tones.

"Lillian Evans, I will pick you up and carry you to the Infirmary," Elizabeth said, pulling out her wand. "You are not going to suffer any longer."

"Elizabeth I'm—"

"I knew it! Frank was right. We'll walk with you Lily," Sirius said.

“And I’ll take your bag,” James said, after noticing that it was nearly dragging Lily down to the ground. He pulled it off her shoulder, and unzipped it. “How many text books do you have?” he asked, alarmed. “There’s enough for like ten classes.”

Lily just glared at him. She crossed her arms over her chest, and stomped away in the direction of the Infirmary. The Marauders, Elizabeth, and Alice followed.

“I don’t understand why you think I’m incapable of dealing with just a slight amount of pain,” Lily said, throwing her hands in the air. “I’m not a porcelain doll.”

“But you are pregnant,” James retorted, running up to her. This caused several people to look at them. He wrapped his arm around her. “I know you’re tired of being the center of attention, but when you’re like this, we can’t help it. I promise once you’re fixed,” Lily gave James a look of disapproval for his words. James just shook his head. “Anyway, we’ll leave you alone.” He kissed her forehead.

“Yeah, whatever,” Lily said, sounding serious and joking at the same time.

“Sure.”

James turned around and noticed that no one was following him. “Where’d they all go?”

Lily looked too. “I’m not sure.” They stood in the corridor for a moment, and then Lily began walking forward again. “Onward to the Infirmary,” she mumbled.

They walked to the Infirmary in silence. Lily was trying to decide if she should be grateful that someone was making her go to the Infirmary, or if she should be furious that someone was making her go to the Infirmary, and they were following her too. James could see the thoughts in Lily’s eyes, because she was walking with her head forward, her eyes narrowed, so he kept to himself, deciding that silence was the thing that was needed for the moment.

When they got to the Infirmary there were a few students already there waiting to be checked. James sat down in a chair behind a first year, and Lily stood beside him. She had refused the chair that he offered her, because it would be too hard to get back up.

About fifteen minutes passed before Madame Pomfrey got to them. She looked at James since he was the one sitting down. "Are you sick again Potter?" She felt his forehead for a temperature.

James shook his head, shaking her hand off in the process. "It's Lily this time."

Madame Pomfrey looked at Lily and felt her forehead. "You're not running a fever. Do I need to get Madame Jacobs?" she asked.

Lily shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know. It's just my back, it's bothering me loads, but not as much as everyone else, and he wants me to get it checked." She looked pointedly at James.

"Have you been doing any strenuous exercise or lifting?" Madame Pomfrey asked, making a note to thank James for making Lily come to her.

"My bag's heavy. It has all my things for school in it." She opened her bag after taking it from James and showed Madame Pomfrey all the books in it.

"That may be the problem. I'll give you a pain relieving potion and the pain should be gone in a few minutes," Madame Pomfrey said. "But you need to start carrying a lighter load with you throughout school. That's a long day with that much to carry."

Lily nodded her head. Madame Pomfrey went to her office to get the pain relieving potion. Lily sighed and began tapping her foot. James just watched with a bemused expression on his face. *'She seems almost moody.'*

He chuckled to himself. Lily looked at him, an eyebrow arched. "What are you laughing at?"

James shook his head. "Nothing." He stopped laughing and looked away from Lily.

Lily gave him a look, knowing he didn't see it, and continued tapping her foot. She glanced at her watch and noticed that Madame Pomfrey had been gone for quite a while. She was about to comment when she returned a moment later. "Madame Jacobs said to contact her if the pain continues." She handed Lily a goblet.

Lily frowned as she drank the potion. '*Why don't any of these taste good?*' Finishing her potion, she handed the goblet back to Madame Pomfrey.

After making sure Lily wasn't running a fever, she released Lily and James from the Infirmary.

They walked down the corridor for several long minutes in complete silence, and then James said, "So...break started." He shoved his hands deep in his pockets and struggled to keep both straps to the bags he was carrying on his shoulders. One shoulder was sagging incredibly lower than the other.

"Yep," Lily replied. She was relieved that her back pain was gone but she felt a little guilty seeing James carry his bag and her much heavier one.

"What are we doing?" James asked. Lily arched an eyebrow. She had never heard of James consider them a *we*, and had always been a *you* or a *me*. "I think earlier you said something about me meeting your parents during the holiday."

Lily looked surprised. "I did?" James nodded his head. She frowned slightly, and then put a hand on her forehead, shaking it. "I did."

"Is that bad?" James asked. He stopped and Lily walked forward a bit before stopping to look at him.

"No...well...yes." James frowned at Lily's words. '*She doesn't want me to meet her parents now? Is it because our row?*' "You see...my parents—I don't know how I could have forgotten to tell them—" Lily shook her head in despair and was quiet for a moment. James waited

patiently for her to continue. “My parents don’t know yet. How’re they going to get over the shock? What if they don’t get over the shock? Why couldn’t Dumbledore have told them?”

“Shock...” James said slowly.

Lily nodded her head. “My parents have a deep set belief in things, like no sex before marriage and whatnot, and I’ve always respected that so I’ve never thought of doing something against them...They’re not going to be happy at all...not at all—and with Petunia!”

James sighed. “That may be a problem.” Lily squeezed her eyes shut, silently berating herself. “But, my grandparents don’t know about it either, but I don’t think they’ll go as barmy—” James wasn’t sure barmy was the best choice of word, with the glare that Lily sent him.

“My parents aren’t barmy!”

“I didn’t mean that they were barmy...their behavior—”

“They are not *barmy*,” Lily said, emphasizing the last word. James could tell she was beginning to get livid, he could see it in her flushed cheeks and she just seemed to be cackling with energy.

James sighed. “They’re not barmy...”

“Thank you.” She gave him a chaste kiss on the cheek, and then she was gone, not telling James where she was going, or what she was doing.

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Lily sat alone in the Library, pieces of parchment surrounding her. A few of the pieces were balled up, and some were scribbled on.

For the last hour and a half, Lily had been trying to write a letter to her parents. She hadn’t accomplished anything, except wasting parchment and ink.

‘*Billionth time’s a charm.*’ Lily thought. She stared at her hand, trying to will it to write.

Mum and Dad,

Hello! I'm sorry I haven't written you all school year. I've been very busy with Head Girl duties and whatnot.

The summer session with the younger students went well. They were quite polite, and they weren't hard to teach at all. I've talked to McGonagall, and she said that the students had benefited a lot from the classes they took.

Lily shook her head. *'I'm really bad at delaying the facts.'* She held her quill above the parchment for a moment, and watched as a drop of ink from the tip of her quill landed on the parchment. It resembled a black tear as it fell, and it splattered on her parchment. *'Such thoughts will not do any good.'* Lily thought reprimanding herself. She felt tears in her eyes from thinking.

I have some news to share with you. I don't know how to say this. I know this is going to surprise the both of you, but I think it's best that you read this together, so get mum, or get dad. Sit down too, that would be a good idea as well.

'You may need to call an ambulance as well, and probably a few doctors, and don't try to find the floo powder in my bedroom, it's locked away quite safely.' Lily stared at her hand as his began to shake. She took a deep breath, and continued writing. *'It would be so much easier face to face.'* She thought.

I'm going to have a baby.

I'm already in my second trimester. It's just about my fifteenth week.

Lily took a deep breath because her handwriting was becoming a bit shaky. It had been a long time since she got pregnant. Her parents were probably going to be angry that it took her this long to tell them.

I'm really sorry that it's taken this long for me to tell you. I've been going through a lot at school, with homework and...well, with everything else. I know you're going to be upset with me, but please hear me out; I wouldn't change my position for the all the money in

the world. Sometimes things happen...and this is one of those times where I think it was destined to happen...

Do you remember me talking about James Potter, the Marauder? I didn't quite fancy him much in the passed. Well, I'd like to invite him home for Christmas, if I'm still allowed to come home of course, so you can meet him. He's changed a lot and he isn't as infantile as he was before, honestly.

'How can I put that in a letter? I hope James doesn't read this...'

Lily stared at the parchment. She was running out of things to say, things she should say at least. *'How should I end it?'* She thought. She glanced at her watch and was surprised to see that it was nearing dinnertime.

Using that as her excuse, she continued on.

It's getting close to dinnertime, so I have to go and get cleaned up and everything. It would be a bit unusual for the Head Girl to skip a meal.

Hopefully I'll get a reply soon.

Love, with all my heart,

Lillian

xoXoXoXox

Chapter Fourteen: Parent's, Rows, and Rumors

A few days has passed since Lily wrote her parents, and James was *supposed* to write his grandparents.

Lily and the Marauders were at breakfast. James was eating his breakfast, which consisted of cereal. Lily wasn't eating anything, because she had morning sickness that morning, and insisted that she was better off. James also thought it was because she had heartburn from the tomato soup she ate the night before.

"Owl post...where is my Daily Prophet?" Remus muttered to himself. He was eating a rather large helping of just about everything with molasses on top.

A few minutes later owl post came. Lily was sitting on the edge of her seat, because she had been waiting for a reply from her parents.

The owls flew all around the Great Hall. James jumped as the Daily Prophet was dropped in his cereal. Milk splashed all over his face and glasses.

"Moony, get your paper," James said, taking off his glasses. He pulled out his wand and pointed it at his face. The milk was gone. He did the same with his glasses and then he put them back on. "Now I need something new to eat. Thanks Moony."

"No problem."

James just shook his head. He looked up from the milk that was all over the place and looked at Lily. She was holding a rather large looking envelope in her hands, and it looked like something a Muggle would send.

"Is that from your parents?" Peter asked, pointing to the envelope. Lily nodded her head. She shakily opened it and read its contents. Remus put down his paper and watched as Lily read her letter. He was interested in what her parents might say.

Dear Lillian,

I'm starting to regret the idea of you staying at that summer session to help those students, no matter how much you helped them.

I expected something happened for you to not write, like your classes having a lot of homework, or even the Marauders being up to no good, still. But this—this news has shocked the entire family, especially your father, who believes there's a deeper problem under your belt, and it has nothing to do with your class work.

Lily noticed immediately that the handwriting changed drastically from her mother's neat script, to her father's messy one.

Lillian dear, you know you can talk to me whenever something happens, and if something happened between you and this Potter character, you can tell me. I'm not sure what Wizarding authorities are like, but our policemen will conduct a great investigation and put this—

Lily's eyes opened wide and she gasped. *'My dad thinks he—no. That's horrible...James would never...'*

Your father has taken the pen out of me hands, I'm sorry. He has been standing over my shoulders since I began this letter, and of course, I have made several attempts to write this, but each and every time, he puts in his own input. He does not believe that you could have made such a decision of such a large degree on your own, if you know what I mean.

But nonetheless, the both of us have talked about it, and we'd like you to come home from school, if such things are happening, but of course, you are of age now, at least in Wizarding standards, and we can't make you do any such thing. Besides, finishing your education is quite important.

Lily closed her eyes, thanking Merlin that her parents had not insisted that she left school. *'I don't think I would have handled it well at all. Not at all.'* She looked at the paper and continued on.

But Lillian, whatever decision you make, your father and I are behind you every step of the way. We support you, and if you need anything,

you know we're just one Owl Post away, you should not be afraid to tell us anything, but of course, you know that as well.

Even though your father is protesting greatly, I would love for James to come home for Christmas, but please inform him of the magic regulations; we do not want your sister to be in a big fuss. I'd hate for things to get terribly strange again in the house.

I am proud that you have continued on with the pregnancy and did not terminate it. We all make mistakes—not that I want you to believe that this is a mistake. This is a human being, and no human being is a mistake. I just want you to know that I'm proud, and I accept your position.

But on the other hand, I do not want, under any circumstances, for you to believe that you are not welcome in this home. You have lived with this family for your entire life, and we love you. I do not ever want to read, hear, or even fathom as to why you would think such a thing! That's about the most horrendous—no, thoughtless thing I have heard from you, ever. Lillian, your father and I, Petunia too, we love you, so never be afraid to come home. Ever.

It's getting close to our dinner time as well, and Vernon is coming over to share the meal with us. Stay healthy, and eat whatever you're craving.

Love, with all my heart, and some,

Mom

“What's it say?” James asked, concerned. Lily was just about crying, and she had gasped in surprise several times during her letter, and at some points she looked saddened and at others she looked upset. ‘*I hope it wasn't bad.*’

Lily tucked the parchment away in her pocket. “Everything's good,” she said, wiping furiously at her eyes.

“Are you sure?” James asked. “I mean, you look upset, and all...They're not too upset are they? I'm sure things will get better

soon Lily.” He set down his spoon, his breakfast forgotten. “Are they upset?”

Lily glanced at her letter. “Not really upset...well my father—” She stopped and shook her head. She decided against informing James what her father thought *really* happened. “I mean, what do you expect? We’re not married or anything...they’re as upset as any other family would be...I guess.” She looked at James a moment, studying him curiously. Then she asked, “Have you written your grandparents yet? What did they say?”

“No,” James said, suddenly interested in his soggy cereal. “I haven’t told them yet.”

Lily’s jaw dropped, and her cheeks began to flush as she became angry. “It’s too late to write them now! What are they going to say when I meet them? Am I supposed to meet them?” Lily asked, suddenly very suspicious. “I am supposed to meet them, aren’t I?”

“It’s not like they’re going to be angry,” James snapped.

Lily’s eyes narrowed in suspicion. “Does that mean that you’ve done this before?” James looked up at her, sending her a confused look. “You can’t be that—have you brought home pregnant girls before?” Her voice was thick with accusation.

Remus, sensing that confrontation was becoming inevitable, put a hand on Lily’s arm. “Prongs has never done such a thing before Lily. How can you think such a thing?” Lily looked at him, and it looked like she was going to cry again. “His grandparents are just very understanding and kind people.” Lily didn’t look entirely convinced, but she was still near tears. “Just think, they allowed Padfoot to live with them for months at a time, and you know how he is. You’ll be taken in very quickly.”

Lily relaxed just slightly and rubbed at her eyes again. “Are you sure?” she asked, looking from Remus to James, and then Sirius. Sirius wasn’t paying attention, and probably didn’t hear the conversation because he was talking to a younger student about Muggle fireworks.

James looked at the younger student. It was the same one from the feast at beginning of the year, and he still looked just as gullible. "Don't listen to him. He's lying and *still* trying to get you killed." Sirius pouted and ended the conversation, turning to James. He was about to ask him why he did that when he noticed that Lily was near tears, and everyone else was giving him a serious look.

"What happened? Did I do something?"

"Lily wants to know if Prongs' grandparents are nice," Peter said.

"Of course they are! They let me live with them for a few months, without paying any money, might I add."

Lily sniffed and wiped at her eyes. "I have nothing to worry about?" she asked.

James shook his head. "Just trust me." He sent her a serious look before breaking out into a grin. Lily smiled and continued wiping at her eyes, cursing her hormones that constantly brought her to tears. *'I've never cried so much in my life.'*

Remus was relieved that the confrontation was now behind them, and he returned his attention back to the Daily Prophet. "I think I'm going to get packed. Then I have some things I'd like to read about N.E.W.T.'s." Lily was up and nearly out of the Great Hall when Sirius called after her.

"N.E.W.T.'s?"

She didn't seem to hear him.

xoXoXoXox

Lily was sitting in the Library again, books stacked to the ceiling. She was just reading general information on the N.E.W.T.'s. She wanted to get the gist of it before actually taking notes on them. *'It would be best to be well prepared.'* She kept saying to herself, flipping through her book.

Someone slid into a seat across from her, and Lily flashed them a smile, not really paying attention to who it was. She worked silently for a few minutes, before she noticed that the person sitting across from her was leafing through one of her books, and making a lot of noise while doing so. Lily hated it when people did that when she was working. "Can I help you?" Lily asked, peering at them. It was a girl she had noticed around since her first year. She was in the same year as her, but in Hufflepuff. She was also one of James's ex-girlfriends from the previous year.

"Actually, you can." Lily flinched, hearing too much cheeriness in her voice. *'Do they not understand that I can see through this...smarminess?'* "I was just wondering if the rumors were true—"

"What rumors?" Lily asked, closing her book with a sigh. She might as well not be distracted by the book. She could agree to something that wasn't true, and that could cause a big mess.

"That you and Jamesie," Lily felt like she could get sick. That was the most disgusting thing she had ever heard...Jamesie...She shuddered. "Are going to have a baby together for a Muggle studies class, about Muggle contraception and how they don't work."

Lily's jaw dropped. "That's the rumor?"

"Well, it's actually...you're failing Muggle Studies I think...but I'm not sure..." Lily looked scandalized. *'That's the rumor?'* The girl looked excited. "So it is true?"

"No...not exactly," Lily said. *'Do I really have to justify myself? I mean...I've never done so before...But clearing the air could do some good.'* "I'm going to have a baby—"

Now it was the girl that looked scandalized. "I wish I was you. If I could be starkers with James Potter, at least one..." She left the table, muttering things to herself.

Lily shook her head, and returned to her book. As she was reading, she lost her concentration because a few girls, including the one who she had just talked to, were sitting close to her table and talking about

her. *'They aren't even trying to be discreet. That's nutters. Those are some great gossipers...'*

After a few more minutes of trying to study, Lily just gave up. She took the book she was reading and a few others and then put the rest away. She was now frustrated because she hadn't been in the Library that long, and she dearly missed the things she used to be able to get done in there. She traveled quickly from the Library, trying carefully to balance the books she was carrying.

When Lily got to the Gryffindor Common Room, she was surprised to see James sitting on the couch, nursing a nosebleed. Remus was sitting next to him with ice on his cheek. Sirius was in an armchair across from them, unscathed. McGonagall was standing in front of them, her hands crossed over her chest, and her lips pursed in a thin line. It seemed like Lily had just got there before the brunt of McGonagall's speech

Lily rushed over to the couch, dropping her books beside Remus. "What happened?" she asked, almost thinking that James and Remus got into a fight, but dismissing it when McGonagall began to speak.

"It seems that Lupin and Potter like to take things into their own hands, instead of coming to Professors." She sighed, and lifted Remus's head to see the bruise on his cheek. "Even though I don't approve of what those other students were saying, I wish you would have gotten me or Albus. We would have been able to properly discipline them."

"Sorry Professor," Remus mumbled.

"Yeah, sorry," James added.

McGonagall sighed. "Even though most Professors wouldn't do as I'm doing, I'm feeling a bit sympathetic, but mostly I pity the situation, I'm not giving you any detentions. But if this happens again, you come to me, not your fists. We're not Muggles."

Sirius laughed, but Lily was still a bit confused.

McGonagall pulled out her wand and pointed it at James. His nosebleed stopped. Then she tapped Remus's cheek and the bruise went away. "Keep that ice on it, your cheek is going to be sore for a bit." Remus nodded his head.

"Thank you Professor," James and Remus chorused. She nodded her head and then left.

Lily put her hands on her hips. "Who were you defending?"

James and Remus exchanged glances.

"Really? You were defending each other?" Lily asked sarcastically. She knew that Remus would not have fought anyone if they said anything about himself or James, but James on the other hand fought about everything and anything.

"No. They were defending you," Sirius said. "I wish I was there! You two always go off and fight without me."

Lily sat down beside James. "What did they say about me this time? That we are failing Muggle studies?"

James shook his head. "Other stuff. I'd rather not repeat it."

Lily sighed. "Some people are gits."

"I know," Sirius said. "We're the Marauders; we'll get them back eventually, so why do they bother to bother us? Stupid..."

Lily looked sternly at Sirius. It had been ages since she heard the Marauders talk about their pranks. She still disapproved of them. "What book is that?" James asked, leaning over Remus to grab one of Lily's books. He read the title and rolled his eyes.

"Even though N.E.W.T.'s are so far away..."

"Did you ever think that I might have my baby when N.E.W.T.'s come around? I might have to take them earlier than the rest of you."

"Yeah, but you still have like six months," Peter said.

“Don’t even bother, Peter. We’ll never be able to understand,” Remus said, laughing. Lily picked up a pillow and threw it at him.

“I don’t think you’re going to get a Christmas present now, Mr. Lupin.”

“Aww Lily, don’t say that. I was only kidding.” Remus said. Lily just shrugged her shoulders. She grabbed her book from James, and opened it, reading it. Remus shook his head at her, and pulled out one of his own books.

“As if that solves anything...” Sirius said, watching them a moment. “Since they’re reading, what are we going to do?” he asked. “Anybody want to play chess?”

“I need to pack.” Peter said. He got up and left.

“Prongs, wanna play chess?”

James nodded his head. “Sure, why not?”

Sirius bounded up the boys dormitory staircase, and came back moments later with his chess set. He set up the pieces, and he and James began playing their game.

While Lily was reading her book, she glanced up and looked at James. He was staring at the chessboard, thinking about what piece to move next. He was very good at chess, and she knew that he and Sirius would probably be at this game for hours. *‘I hope my parents like him...I really do.’*

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Chapter Fifteen: Meet the Parents

"I should be home tomorrow," James said. "I don't know when, but I'll floo over and get you guys."

"Okay," Remus said. He slapped James on the back and gave Lily a hug. "Hope you survive meeting the parents. See you tomorrow."

Remus stepped through the barrier. Sirius said goodbye to Lily and James, and then he and Peter walked through the barrier.

James grabbed Lily's hand and had her walk in front of him. He was pulling their trolley behind him.

Lily squeezed his hand, when she caught sight of her sister standing as far away from the barrier as possible. Her nose was in the air, and her arms were across her chest. Standing beside her was a large beefy man, who Lily knew as Vernon Dursley.

James grimaced slightly. "Those are your parents?"

"No!" Lily bellowed. She blushed when she realized her reaction. "It's my sister and her boyfriend." She pulled him to the car.

"Hi Petunia, Vernon." Lily said.

"Hello," Petunia said, eyeing her sister. She glanced at James. "The boot's open."

James looked at the end of the car and saw the hood of it popped up. He pulled the trolley with him as he walked to the car. He lifted the hood higher, and then lifted his trunk into the boot. He barely managed to get Lily's in, but after a few curse words he got it to fit.

James shut the hood, and then walked to the open car door. Lily was already in the car. She had her seat belt on, but she looked uncomfortable sitting in the back. James slid into the seat beside her and shut the door. Almost immediately the car was driving away from Kings Cross.

The twenty minutes James was in the car, he thought he was going to die. There was an uncomfortable awkward silence the entire ride. Lily didn't speak to him or her sister, so James chose to not speak either.

When the car stopped, Petunia told them to get out. James sighed. Lily unbuckled her seat belt, and James did the same. He got out of the car, and watched as Vernon unlocked the boot. He didn't offer to help James with the trunks. Both he and Petunia just walked into the house.

"I'm sorry 'bout that." Lily said, getting out of the car. "I'll explain it all to you later."

James nodded his head. He got both the trunks out of the boot, and he was now just staring at them. He looked at Lily. "I know this is a Muggle neighborhood, but can I use magic, please?"

"Err..." Lily looked around a moment. She didn't see anyone outside, and she didn't see anyone looking. "Go ahead. But quickly."

James nodded and pulled out his wand. He quickly shrank the trunks and put them in his cloak pocket. He stood up and shut the hood to the boot. He smiled at Lily. He could tell she was nervous, but he was pretty nervous as well. He slipped his hand in hers, and the two of them walked to Lily's house.

When they reached the house, Lily's mother ran to her and hugged her tightly. Lily dropped James's hand and hugged her mother back.

James stood behind her, and ran a hand through his hair. Realizing that he was playing with his hair, he stopped. Lily's mother broke away from the hug, and looked up at James.

"So you're James Potter," she said, staring at James. James just nodded his head mutely. Blood was pounding in his ears and he didn't think he could trust his voice.

Lily's mother held her hand out. "Well, it's nice to meet you. Let's get out of the snow, shall we? Are either of you hungry?"

They walked into the house, and Lily showed him where to hang up his cloak. She toed off her shoes, and then stepped to the side. James did the same, and then stepped back alongside Lily. "What am I supposed to do?" James whispered.

"Meet my parents," Lily said.

Lily's mother came back with a plate of biscuits. She offered one to Lily, and then James. As James took his biscuit, he took the time to look at Lily's mother. She was a tad bit taller than Lily, and she had auburn hair tied tightly in a bun. She had green eyes and they sparkled like Lily's.

They stood around for a few minutes in an awkward silence. James shifted from one foot to another, and nibbled on his biscuit. *'I imagined a bit more action. Maybe a few fist fights with Lily's father or getting beaten by her mother...'* Lily's mother was watching him, and James felt uncomfortable under her heavy scrutiny. She was using the look Lily had often used on him and the other Marauders in the past to see who had done what prank.

"Mum!" Lily cried out, eyeing her mother warily. "It's not going to be like this the entire time, is it?"

Lily's mother looked at Lily. She noted the distress on her youngest daughter's face, and immediately decided that this was not the way to go through things. "I'm sorry dear," she said. "Why don't we all go to the kitchen? Dinner will be done in a little while. James do you like tea?"

"Yes Ma'am," James said, slowly walking behind Lily's mother. Lily followed him.

"Oh, just call me Marie, and if you must, Mrs. Evans." she called over her shoulder. James just nodded his head. *'The first and only thing I say to her mother is Yes Ma'am. That's just about horrible. Great way of making an impression Potter. I'm talking to myself in my head...I'm going mad.'*

They sat down at the kitchen table. Petunia and Vernon were already in there, sitting and drinking tea. Petunia twitched just slightly when

they sat down at the table, but she didn't say anything. Vernon, on the other hand, gave a disgruntled grunt, and looked away from them.

James gave Lily a bemused look, but she just shook her head, lowering her gaze to the table.

Mrs. Evans came back to the table with three cups of tea. "Do you want anything dear? Lemon, honey, or sugar?"

James shook his head. Mrs. Evans smiled and sat down on the other side of the table from Lily and James, handing them their cups.

"So tell me about yourself," she began, "And please tell me how you two managed to be friends, no offense James, but Lily wasn't the biggest fan of you a little while ago."

James smiled despite the way Mrs. Evans said it. "There's not much to say. I'm in the same year and house as Lily. I'm the Head Boy—"

"That must mean you're a good student," Mrs. Evans commented.

"I guess you can say that," James said. "But I'm not as brilliant as Lily. She's always on top of things, no matter what it is. You should have seen her yesterday; she was already studying for N.E.W.T.'s."

As Lily explained to her mother what N.E.W.T.'s were, James looked around the kitchen. He saw the stove and the icebox. The kitchen wasn't that different from his, except his stove was a bit more unique, not just a square with fire on top.

"Oh, I remember you saying that you had those. Didn't you have a test named after another animal a few years back?"

"O.W.L.'s," Lily said. "Those tests were easy."

James snorted, returning to the conversation. "The only thing I remember about the O.W.L.'s was when Snape..." He stopped when he saw the look Lily was giving him. Her eyebrow was arched high, and her lips were pursed together in a tight line. Her eyes were saying, 'Do you really want to finish that story, Potter.' James

inwardly flinched, knowing he had crossed onto territory he shouldn't have, and in front of her mother to boot.

"The infamous Snape," Mrs. Evans said. "I've heard this story, and I must say, I think it was a bit justified. He does seem a bit bad for my liking."

Lily sighed, but smiled. "You're not supposed to agree mum. That's setting a bad example."

"As if," James said, "The only person who shouldn't be around bad examples is Padfoot. He just sucks those in."

"That's Sirius," Lily added. "The main prankster in the Marauders."

Mrs. Evans nodded her head. There was silence for a moment, and James glanced at Lily's sister. She seemed to be admiring her hands while talking to Vernon. "Have you found out what you're having yet?"

James quickly returned to the conversation. Lily shook her head. "I have a doctor, Madame Jacobs, and she said when school starts again, I could find out if I wanted to."

"Are you excited James?" Mrs. Evans asked. She eyed James, knowing that she'd be able to tell if he were lying or not. Lily also looked at James. The last time she checked, he wasn't *too* psyched about the baby, especially during the bad row they had. She hadn't had time or the energy to ask if his opinion changed.

"I am," James said hesitantly. "I think it's about time I grow up." He smiled at Lily, and Lily just shook her head, knowing what he meant.

"That's good," Mrs. Evans stood up and brought the tea kettle back to the table, and then she began fussing around the stove. James watched as she pulled out a large pot from the oven. Mrs. Evans got an oven mitt, and then lifted the top off.

Suddenly the kitchen was filled with pleasant aromas. Lily's stomach growled, and she giggled. "I'm hungry now,"

Lily looked at Petunia, and held her gaze a moment, before Petunia looked away, turning to Vernon. Lily shrunk back into her seat and put her hands in her lap. She wasn't smiling anymore.

James put his hand on Lily's arm. Lily just shook it off, and scooted away just slightly. James then looked at Petunia, but she wasn't looking at him, it was Vernon.

Before James could say anything, Mrs. Evans came back. She sighed when she saw Lily, and then she looked at Petunia. "What?" Petunia snapped.

"Nothing," Mrs. Evans said. "Dinner will be done in a few minutes."

"Great," Lily mumbled.

"So James," Mrs. Evans said. "What about your parents? What do they think? Have they met Lily? I would love to meet them."

Lily glanced at James. *'He never talks about his parents. He always stays with his grandparents...Maybe they all live there.'*

"They don't know...they both passed away a few years ago," James said, bowing his head just slightly.

"Oh," Lily said, surprised. "I thought they were Aurors."

James sighed. "They were." He gave Lily a look that said drop it. Lily did so, but she took James's hand in hers.

Vernon looked from Lily to James, and back to Lily. He then stood up, his fists balled up so tightly that his knuckles were white. "Serves them right for being the kind they are," he spat.

James stood up, his chair falling backward. He yanked his hand out of Lily's. His fists were balled up tightly too. "What?" he demanded.

"You heard me," snarled Vernon. "You and your—Freaks! The lot of you should be des—"

"Vernon!"

Lily's father was standing in the doorway, his chest heaving. He looked just as angry as James did, but it wasn't just him who said it. It was Mrs. Evans and Petunia too. Mr. Evans pointed his finger to the front door. "I think it's about time you go home."

Vernon nodded his head curtly and walked out of the kitchen, shoving James into the table. James spun around, nearly going after him, but Lily was holding his arm, keeping him at bay. Petunia and Mr. and Mrs. Evans followed him. It took all of James's self control to not rip out of Lily's grasp and go after him.

After a moment, James sat down. "What's his bloody problem?"

"Language," Lily said. "And I said I'd tell you later."

"I didn't say one bloody word to that effing git and he had enough nerve to say that to me? I don't even *know* him." James said, ignoring Lily's reprimand for language. "I should have cursed him into the ruddy wall." James's eyes were blazing, and Lily knew it had been a low blow to talk about ones dead parents. She too wanted to curse Vernon into the wall, but she knew her parents would disapprove of that too.

A few moments later Mr. and Mrs. Evans returned. The silence was stifling in the kitchen, and Mrs. Evans began fussing around, finishing dinner.

Mr. Evans sat across from James, and held out his hand. "I'm William, but you can call me Mr. Evans." James shook his hand, but his fingers were still tense. Almost immediately after the handshake, James retreated his hand. "I'm sorry about that James. It seems Vernon can't control himself around new people."

"You don't need to apologize," James said, keeping his stony expression. *'What have I done to him? Did I accidentally knock him over once? Hard to do that, he's a bloody whale.'* Lily rubbed his arm soothingly, almost sensing his thoughts. She waited until James's body relaxed before turning her attention to her father.

"Hi daddy," she said quietly.

Her father looked at the hand that she was still on James's arm, and then he looked at her. "Come here, Pumpkin," Mr. Evans said. He stood up, as did Lily. Lily walked to him, and wrapped her arms around him. He hugged Lily tightly, and Lily hugged him back just as fiercely.

When they broke apart, Lily was smiling again. She sat back down beside James. Mr. Evans was smiling fondly at Lily, but then he looked at James; he wasn't smiling anymore. "You *must* treat my daughter right."

"I wouldn't have it any other way, Mr. Evans," James said proudly.

xoXoXoXox

James was laying on the couch in the living room. It was well passed his bedtime, because he had to be up early to go to his grandparent's house the next day, but he couldn't sleep.

Lily was in the kitchen, talking to her parents.

'Today wasn't that bad.' James concluded. *'It could have been worse. I could have cursed Vernon into oblivion, and then right afterward be beaten to death by Lily's father. Well...Mr. Evans would have beaten me either or. I guess he just felt bad that Vernon said something so rude.'*

James sighed and threw a hand over his eyes. *'Mrs. Evans is okay too. She's nice, and she cooks great. Petunia on the other hand...needs to get the wand out of her arse and get a new man.'*

It was quiet, and James could finally feel his eyes drooping, when Lily appeared in the doorway. "James, are you awake?"

"Yeah, just barely." James could hear her padded footsteps coming towards him. He sat up, and Lily sat down beside him. James opened his arms, and Lily leaned into him. She laid her head on his chest.

"I didn't know about your parents," she said quietly.

"Yeah...well it happens." James said quickly.

"When did it happen?" Lily asked. She peered up at James. He wasn't looking at her, but at the wall on the other side of the room. That wall contained the blazing fireplace.

"In my fifth year." James sighed, and halfheartedly ran a hand through his hair. He didn't care at the moment that Lily was in his presence.

"I'm sorry," Lily said. "I'm sorry that man of my sisters couldn't keep his mouth closed."

"It's not your fault, don't apologize," James said. "It's his fault that he doesn't like *my kind*."

Lily sighed, but decided not to say anything. She could hear James's labored breathing, and knew that he was about to fall asleep, but she wasn't tired, and didn't want to be up alone.

"James?" Lily asked.

"Hmm?"

Lily smiled and shifted so her back was to his chest. "Want to feel something?" Before James could reply, Lily lifted his hand to her stomach. She moved it around for a moment, and then she pressed her hand down on his. At first James didn't know what she was doing, but then he felt just a slight thump against her skin. "Can you feel it?" Lily asked. James just nodded his head mutely, his heart pounding quickly against his chest. "It's the baby."

James smiled and kissed Lily's temple. "I hope so," he said. Lily giggled. James kept his hand there for a few more minutes, even when the little thump disappeared. "You know, tomorrow, when we go to my house, I think it would be best if you didn't eat breakfast. We're going to leave early anyway, but with you flooing, I think it would be best." Lily nodded her head against his chest. She could finally feel her eyes drooping and she was trying not to fall asleep.

Lily shifted around a moment, and then she sighed. "I'm not going to be able to sleep here," She said. "It's definitely not good for my back."

James nodded his head. "And your father will more than likely kill me." He and Lily laughed. "I'm about to fall asleep, so unless you want to hear me snore for a little bit, I suggest that you head to bed."

Lily nodded her head. She stood up and smiled at James. She kissed him on the cheek, and then bounded to the stairs that were off to the side in the living room.

"Night James!"

"Night Lily."

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Chapter Sixteen: Bertie and Bott

James was sitting on the couch he had slept on, cradling his head in his hands. He was still tired; he didn't sleep well the night before, only because he rolled off the couch twice and then he couldn't fall back asleep after the second time.

He yawned, then looked up when he heard someone coming towards him. It was Mr. Evans, and he was wearing a robe over his pajamas. "Morning Sir," James said, waving slightly.

"Morning." He had a steaming cup of coffee with him. He took a sip, and then sat down in an armchair somewhat close to James. "I think it's about time we have a talk."

James gulped quietly, and nodded his head. He sat up straighter, and looked at him.

Mr. Evans put his cup on the stand beside him, and then crossed his legs. "I know you were not my daughters' friend in the passed few years and as far as I know, she hasn't liked you up until now," he paused to peer at James. James nodded his head mutely. "One thing I need to know is, was there any unnecessary force behind—"

"No," James said automatically. "I would never do that to anyone. Especially Lily."

"Good," Mr. Evans said. He picked up his cup and then took another sip. James watched him. Mr. Evans had left a strong uncomfortable silence between them. James swallowed again, and then he looked at his hands. "Another thing...why are you with my daughter?"

James just stared at Mr. Evans. '*Why am I with Lily?*' "Other than the obvious," Mr. Evans stated.

James was quiet a moment. He thought about going on and on about how beautiful she was, but he thought that wouldn't go over well. "Because," James began, thinking that wasn't a great way to start his explanation. Mr. Evans lowered his gaze so he could see into James's eyes. "Because she's the most brilliant witch in our entire school." James stopped, racking his brain for ideas. "When she has

her mind set to something, nothing can discourage her. She's proved all the Purebloods wrong by being a strong and magnificent witch." James paused a moment. "And I've fancied her for a long time."

Mr. Evans leaned forward. "Do you love her?" he asked. "Are you willing to be there for her and be the man that you need to be and take care of the baby, even if you're not together, because just face the facts, I honestly don't think you're going to be together forever."

James swallowed hard. "With all due respect Sir, I am not the type of *man* to leave someone hanging. I would never leave Lily when she's like this, and I'm not planning on leaving her in the near future. Even if it's early in our relationship, I know for a fact that I love her with all my heart, and nothing you say will discourage me." James sat back, his arms crossed over his chest.

James caught movement through the corner of his eye. Lily walked down the stairs, pausing in the middle of the room. She looked from James to her father, and then she shook her head. She walked out of the room, and went to the kitchen.

James watched as she walked out of the room, a slight smile playing at his lips. He turned back to Mr. Evans, who was still looking serious. "Well James," he began, taking a long draught from his cup. "You better treat her right. No ands ifs or buts. I do not want to hear of you laying one finger on her, no matter how justified it may seem."

"I don't hit women," James said. '*What is with him thinking I'm going to hurt her?*'

Mr. Evans nodded his head. He stood up and took another long sip from his cup. "I'll be seeing you around then, won't I?"

James nodded his head and watched as he left the room. He sighed and leaned forward, resting his head in his hands again. '*Maybe I was wrong. He doesn't like me.*'

A few minutes later Lily walked into the room. She sat down beside James and wrapped her arms around him. "Sometimes he can be a bit rude."

“Yeah,” James murmured. “No kidding.”

Lily smiled and kissed him on the cheek. “I think we should get ready, unless you want to go home in your pajamas.”

James just nodded his head. Lily unwrapped her arms from around him, and then James stood up. Lily got up a moment afterwards, and she looked at James. “What did my father say to you?”

James just shook his head. “Nothing important.”

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“Everything’s packed? You have the presents? All right, we’ll talk to you later Lily.” Mrs. Evans hugged Lily one last time, tightly.

“Bye!” Lily said. James put a pinch of floo powder into the flames, and watched as they turned a fluorescent green. James stepped into the fire first, and then Lily stepped in next to him.

Lily waved slightly, as James shouted, “Frank and Sophie’s place, London!”

Lily closed her eyes tightly and held her stomach as the world around her began spinning quickly. She was glad she listened to James when he said not to eat breakfast.

James watched as fireplaces spun around him. He smiled, and just barely turned to look at how Lily was doing, when the both of them were spit out of the fire.

They both landed on the floor, the breath getting knocked out of them. James hurried and got up, helping Lily to her feet. “Are you okay? Do you need to sit down?”

“Fine, fine,” Lily said. She took a deep breath.

“You sure? I’m sorry. I forgot that we got spit out.” He ran a hand through his hair, and Lily gave him a look. He stopped. “Sorry,” he mumbled.

Lily sighed, and looked around. They were in a living room, and she could smell things cooking. Her stomach growled.

“Grandma!” James called, stepping away from the fire. “Grandma? Grandpa? Are you home?”

“Did they know you were coming?”

“I come home every Christmas, so...” James said, peeking into the kitchen. No one was in there. “Bertie? Bott?” James called.

“Who’re they?” Lily asked, looking at the floor, expecting to see some strange animals coming towards her.

“They’re just my dogs,” James said dismissively.

Lily gasped as thunder came down the steps. Thinking that someone fell, she rushed to them. Standing at the bottom was a very large dog. It peered at Lily curiously. Another dog came down the steps, and it began barking at Lily.

Lily stepped back, her hands in the air.

“Bertie! Stop barking!” James yelled, running into the living room. The dogs barked excitedly and ran to James, nearly knocking him over.

James smiled and patted them on the heads. “They’re St. Bernard’s. My parents got them for me a while back.” He patted them a bit longer, and then he beckoned Lily to him. “They don’t bite.”

Lily held out her hand, and patted the one closest to her. “That’s Bott. She’s the one that didn’t bark.”

“They’re really big,” Lily said. She laughed as Bott licked her hand. She wiped it off on her pants. “Where’re your grandparents?”

James shrugged his shoulder. “They’re around here somewhere. Grandma is making breakfast still.”

Suddenly the front door opened, and in came an older man. He was carrying a large package while an older woman walked in behind him.

They shook the snow off their cloaks and hung them up. The older man slipped off his boots, and looked up, surprised to see James on the floor, and Lily standing in front of him. Both dogs barked excitedly, but didn't move.

"It's nice to see you finally came back. Who'd you bring home?" His grandfather put away his boots and then walked towards Lily. He held out his hand to Lily.

"Oh!" James, jumping into the air. "Grandpa, this is Lily Evans, she—"

"The infamous Miss Lily Evans!"

James's grandmother appeared. She looked a little excited, but tired at the same time. "You better come with me in the kitchen and sit down. If you're here with James, he must have done something...Come on. I'll make you some tea. Are you hungry? I'll make you anything you'd like, as long as it isn't anything that Sirius Black would eat. He ate just about everything put together on a sandwich," she said. She grabbed Lily's hand and pulled her into the kitchen. Lily was smiling. She hadn't even said anything, and the older woman had taken to her.

James shook his head, but his grandfather just smiled. "She's been excited. Sophie's missed you dearly since you left. The house was too quiet,"

"Yeah," James said, drawing out the word a bit longer than need be. He had just realized that he his grandparents didn't know anything about the baby news. He swallowed hard and was about to say something when his grandfather interrupted him.

"What's going on? Is something bothering you?" his grandfather asked.

"Yeah...err...I've been meaning to owl you and Grandma about this...Uhh," he paused. "Maybe you should sit...Or better yet...Let's get Grandma first—"

"You probably should sit down, and stop pacing. You're making me dizzy."

James sat down immediately on the couch. He began playing with his jumper, and tried to swallow, but his mouth had become too dry. '*Why am I so nervous?*'

"What's going on?"

James laughed nervously. "Would you mind becoming Great Grandparents?"

At first James's grandfather looked at him confused, not understanding what James was talking about. And then his eyes opened wide. "Lily?" he whispered. James nodded his head.

"Sophia! You better come in here!"

Almost immediately she came into the room. She watched as he sat down beside James. "What is it Frank?" she asked worriedly, thinking that something had happened to Frank.

It was silent for only a moment, and then Frank said, "It seems to me, Sophie, that we are going to become *great* grandparents."

Lily inched her way into the living room, standing by the door incase she needed to make a quick escape. Sophie gasped and turned towards James. She had an unidentifiable expression on her face; almost like a mixture of anger and surprise. "James, you haven't even finished school yet! You aren't even *married*. That kind of *activity* should not exist until *after* you're married!"

James's face turned a light shade of pink from his grandmothers tirade. "Grand-"

"Oh James Potter, you're always getting yourself into some type of mischief. What would your parents say right now? How are you going to get anymore schooling or training if you're--" She suddenly stopped and turned towards Lily.

James was about to jump in the air and stop her. No matter how much he loved his grandmother, he would not allow her to rip into Lily.

“And Lily! Are you okay? Do you need anything? Come here, sit,” She grabbed Lily by the arm and pulled her to an armchair. She had her sit down, and then she conjured up an ottoman for her to prop her feet up with. “Are you hungry? I can cook you anything you’d like.”

James and Frank exchanged glances. Frank didn’t look at all surprised that his wife had tore James up and then offered to cook Lily a nine-course-meal. He was just surprised by the fact that she didn’t finish yelling at James.

“I’m fine,” Lily whispered.

Sophie turned back to James. “James Potter...” she said quietly, shaking her head. “Well, you better help me finish breakfast and set the table. We weren’t expecting you this morning, but we’ll manage.” She turned back to Lily. “Anything you want specifically for breakfast dear? I already told you I can make anything.”

xoXoXoXox

“So her parents don’t hate you?” Remus asked as he dragged his trunk through the fireplace. Sirius and James followed behind him.

“Her father doesn’t like me, but her mum’s nice enough,” James said. He indicated for Remus to set his trunk in the corner of the room. Four sleeping bags were rolled up beside Sirius’s trunk.

“I wish Wormtail was coming. Too bad his mum was sick,” Sirius said, walking towards the kitchen. He peeked in and saw Sophie sitting at the table, Lily beside her. They were talking quietly.

“Grandma Sophie!” Sirius called, walking away from the kitchen. “When you have time, come greet your favorite grandson!”

Lily looked around the kitchen. She could see Sirius’s retreating back. “Favorite grandson?” Lily asked.

“He’s here more than James is,” Sophie said, laughing. She smiled softly at Lily. “Do you know what you’re going to do after Hogwarts?”

Lily shook her head. "Not anymore, no. I wanted to work with in the Ministry doing Charms work and things pertaining to Muggles, but with a baby...I'm not sure if I can anymore."

"Of course you can, it'll just take some time. And you should always know that I'll watch the baby whenever you or James need me to. But you know, after you ask your parents first."

Lily just smiled in return, and stretched. She pushed herself away from the table. "I think it's about time you greet your favorite grandson. He gets depressed easily."

"Tell me about it," Sophie said, before she and Lily broke out into quiet giggles.

Lily got up and made her way out of the kitchen. When Sirius noticed that they were done with their conversation, he got up from the couch and walked into the kitchen. Lily walked towards James, and he looked up at her expectantly.

"Where's the loo?"

James smiled. "Upstairs. That's one thing that drives me crazy. Grandpa always said we'd only need one bathroom, but with all my friends coming over, and family...he regretted it. " Lily nodded her head and walked towards the stairs. She walked up them slowly, listening to James and Remus talk about pranks. She shook her head slowly. *'Just shows what Christmas is going to be like.'*

xoXoXoXox

Chapter Seventeen: Cliché

Lily wasn't sure how they did it, but somehow she, James, and Remus were sleeping on the loveseat. Sirius was spread out all over on the floor, his left leg nearly knocking over the pile of gifts underneath the Christmas tree.

Lily's eyes opened and she looked around. She felt as if her bladder was going to explode, and at the moment there was no way to get off the loveseat without waking James. His arms were wrapped tightly around her middle, and her legs were resting on Remus' lap. She blinked slowly and then carefully tried to disentangle herself from his grasp. The four of them had stayed up all night, and fell asleep right before dawn, which was only a few hours beforehand.

After a moment James's hands were resting at his sides. Lily carefully lifted her feet away from Remus, wincing at the stiffness in her legs. She stood up and walked silently towards the stairs. James had told her that only two of the twelve stairs creaked, and that it was the one at the bottom and the third from the top. Lily carefully skipped over those stairs, not wanting to wake James's grandparents.

After using the loo, Lily made her way back downstairs. Halfway down the steps she nearly fell as she heard Sirius scream at the top of his lungs, "HAPPY CHRISTMAS! WAKE UP!"

After steadying herself, Lily walked down the stairs. She saw Sirius beneath the Christmas tree, passing out presents, and James was groggily trying to wake himself. He seemed to be awake when Remus dumped a cup of cold water on his head. Lily laughed and then she looked around. A moment later James's grandparents left the kitchen, as if they knew this chaos was going to happen.

"Lilee! Where you be? Come get your presents before I open them for you!" Sirius shouted, still under the tree. Lily cleared her throat.

"I'm right here Sirius."

"Goodness Padfoot, can't you just look out to see who's up?"

"Where're my glasses? Did I drop them?" James slowly got off the couch and began searching for his glasses. "Bloody chess board. Why'd we play chess so late?"

"Language," Lily reprimanded, walking to the side of the couch that Remus slept on and picked up his glasses. She handed them to him, and he smiled gratefully.

"Presents," Sirius reminded, coming out from beneath the tree. "Everyone ready? Grandma Sophie and Granddad Frank? Are you here?"

"We're up Sirius," Sophie said, walking to the couch and sitting down. All the teenagers got on the floor, Lily sitting on a pile of sleeping bags.

Sirius evenly distributed the presents until they were all gone. Then he counted to three and everyone dug into their presents.

The first present Lily opened was from Sirius. It was a large photo album and it a lot of pictures of James. When she opened the cover there was a note from Sirius.

Lily, I think it's about time you get this book. It's full of strange and stupid things that Prongs does, and you should use it for reference. If your child ever does anything like this, correct it immediately, or the child will turn out exactly like Prongs, hence the first picture.

Sirius Black

Lily looked at the picture. It was the most peculiar thing she had ever seen. It was of James and it seemed like he was drinking gelatin through a straw. It was a moving picture, and after a moment, James would pull away and grab his jaw, and then he would drink some more, then the picture reset itself.

Lily looked at James, who wasn't paying attention to what Lily had. He was trying to unwrap a difficult present. Lily returned her attention back to the picture and giggled to herself. There were a lot pages with pictures and notes attached to them, so she knew she'd have a lot of fun reading it.

“Ahh, the stupid book,” Remus said, leaning over Lily’s shoulder to look at it. “We all have one, I think.”

Lily just smiled and set it beside her. There were a handful of presents from Alice and Elizabeth, most of which Lily was very glad she had. There was foot rub for her aching feet, and a picture frame that had to of been decorated by Elizabeth, because it was quite creative. It had macaroni and beads and a few things Lily didn’t even recognize. Her mother had gotten her a book, which Lily knew she was going to read, and her father got her a gift certificate to a baby store, one Lily had never heard of.

“Lily, your parents got me boxers and socks,” James held up two separate packages for Lily to see. “Guess they weren’t expecting to get me a gift.”

“Ahh...well...” Lily said, unsure if he was offended or not. James looked up at her and smiled, which filled Lily with relief.

“I’ll be writing them a note,” he said, setting them aside.

Lily laughed. There was one present left for her, and she thought it was from James because she hadn’t gotten one from him yet. She opened it and was surprised when the card attached to the gift said Remus and it was double wrapped. Lily took off the second layer of wrapping paper and was stunned to see a gift basket full of Muggle candy.

“Oh my, Remus, you did your research.”

“I had to sneak out of Hogsmeade to get that stuff Lily. You’re lucky I can apparate.” He gave Lily a one armed hug. Lily was tempted to start eating it, but thought better because she hadn’t eaten breakfast yet.

“Well, if that’s everything, we’ll eat breakfast and then clean up,” Frank said. Sirius was the first one up, tip-toeing around presents and wrapping paper. Following him was Remus and James. Lily gave James a weird look, slightly hurt that he didn’t get her anything.

She managed to get up on her own, listening to everyone in the kitchen goofing off. Sophie was trying to order them, but they were having too much fun being loud. As Lily was about to walk away, something fell off her stomach. She looked at it, and it was a small package connected to an envelope. She picked it up and opened the envelope.

Lily,

I know things have changed a lot between us. Honestly, I'm surprised that you're even talking to me, because I've totally thrown your life off course and in a totally different direction. But I think of that as a good thing, you know what I mean? Not everything can be, or should be, for that matter, planned out, and the small (or, in our case, big) surprises can change us for the better. Just look at me as an example. I've grown up a wee bit since September. You've grown...kinder to me since September...

I spent ages looking for a gift for you Lily, and I only got one. I wanted to get you everything and anything, but that just didn't seem like enough, and then what I ended up getting you...it's kind of cliché, to be honest. I didn't want to get it at all, but then you would have ended up with nothing, and that's absolutely out of the question!

I'm not sure what you would call it. It's lovely to say the least. I didn't get you something from Zonkos, that's for sure. Actually, I didn't get you anything from Hogsmeade. Like Remus, I had to leave to find this.

But now you know I'm terribly cliché, and that's just the way I am.

I hope you like it nonetheless. I heard Muggles like clichés, and since you're Muggle born...

And I know we haven't talked about anything yet...but I've fancied you for years Lily, and this isn't a proper engagement...thing, but I want you to think about it, okay?

James

Lily finished the letter, and read it twice for good measure. Then she tucked the note under her arm and opened the small box that was attached to it. A million things had been running through her mind as to what cliché thing James could have gotten her, and even though the gift that he gave her was at the top of the cliché list, it still took her breath away.

It was a white gold band with a flower in the middle. There were six white gold petals to the flower, and each petal was set with a diamond, in the middle of the flower was a diamond.

At first Lily couldn't breathe. Then she thought back to the letter. *'Engagement ring? He's proposing? For nearly the passed seven years I've hated him...and after a few months he's proposing? Proposing? Am I ready to spend the rest of my life with him?'* Lily grinned broadly. *'I wouldn't have it any other way.'* She managed to get the ring out of the box and onto her right index finger in a flash. She felt giddy for a moment, just staring at it.

"Lily, are you going to eat breakfast?"

Lily looked up. James was standing in the doorway leading to the kitchen. Lily wasn't sure where the energy came from, but she ran to James and leapt into his arms, wrapping her legs around his waist. She hadn't moved that quick in ages, and she was glad James didn't fall.

"What is..."

"I love it! I love you!" She grabbed his face and kissed him soundly on the lips. James was beyond surprised, and when they pulled away he gave her a bemused look. She just grinned at him broadly.

"So cliché is good?" he asked.

"Cliché is more than good," Lily said, hugging him tightly.

"And did you say you loved me?" James asked, pulling away. Lily looked at him and blushed slightly. She hadn't even realized she said it. She nodded her head, her eyes sparkling brightly. *'If he proposed, then he shouldn't be surprised by my feelings.'*

James's smile seemed to grow, making his face hurt. "I love you too," he said, before kissing her again.

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Chapter Eighteen: Boom

'Today, of all days, there's a mass fight between Gryffindors and Slytherins.' Lily thought slowly making her way from Dumbledore's office. It had actually been roughly thirteen people, but surprisingly it wasn't the Marauders who had initiated the fight. They were actually nowhere to be seen at that time. *'But now I'm late.'* Lily thought bitterly. *'At least I have a pass.'* She looked at the pink slip of paper in her hand. *'McGonagall shouldn't mind. Merlin, I'm hungry.'*

It was way too late for her to eat breakfast and the kitchens was absolutely out of the question. The pass only gave her seven minutes to get from Dumbledore's office to McGonagall's classroom. Lily sighed grumpily and hitched her bag higher on her shoulder. Against the Marauders better judgment, she was carrying a heavier load of books than normal because she was going to the library before and during lunch to study for N.E.W.T.'s. The Marauders thought it was a bit silly for her to be studying so early, but she chose to ignore their comments.

As Lily neared McGonagall's door, she stopped, swaying on her feet just slightly. She held onto the wall a moment and took a deep breath. *'That was a bit weird...'* After a few moments of waiting for the swaying to disappear, she continued on her way to McGonagall's classroom.

From the sound of it, McGonagall must have been teaching an interesting lesson because someone had just shrieked. Lily opened the door and stood in the doorway, trying to figure out what was going on.

Sirius was in the middle of the classroom on his knees, and it looked like he was begging McGonagall not to do something. Lily's brow furrowed as she tried to focus on what was next to Sirius. She almost burst out laughing when she saw what it was.

"Black, that turtle is purring, and you were supposed to change him back to a quill ages ago. Turn him over."

"Please Minnie! I beg of you, let me keep him." Sirius slid closer to McGonagall on his knees.

If Lily didn't think this was as pathetic as she did, she would have laughed. It seemed like McGonagall was thinking the same thing, even though the corner of her mouth was twitching upwards just a tad bit.

"Black, turtles are against the school rules. You can't have him."

"But...But...I love him! His name is--" Before Sirius could finish, McGonagall pulled out her wand and flicked it at the purring turtle. The turtle slowly changed into a quill, and Sirius stared shocked, before looking at McGonagall.

"He was my pet, Minnie."

"You'll deserve a pet when you can respect your *professors*." That seemed to be the end of it, and McGonagall turned around, looking at everyone in the classroom. "I see everyone's done with their vocabulary, so I'll just hand out a pop quiz."

It seemed like that was the least of things that everyone wanted to do, so McGonagall took that as a no, that they weren't all done. She instructed that everyone do as they were told to do before, which was to write the exact instructions to transfigure a quill into an animal that wasn't large, and give the instructions to their partner and see how well they do when they transfigure.

After McGonagall was at her desk, Lily walked to her and handed her her pass. McGonagall took it and told Lily what to do and who to work with. Lily was about to protest, Violet wasn't her favorite person, but she held her tongue. Head Girl's were supposed to be able to work with anybody and do almost anything that a Professor asked of them. Lily walked towards her and sat down in her seat with a sigh. She took her bag off her shoulders and allowed it to fall to the floor with a plop. Then she opened it and pulled out a clean piece of parchment, ink, and a quill.

"Do you know what you're doing *Evans*?" Violet sneered.

"Of course I do," Lily replied, biting her tongue. '*Don't get nasty...just work.*'

Lily thought back to the lesson where they learned what was easy to transfigure and what wasn't. *'This is the hardest class I've ever taken...Quills into rats, isn't that the easiest one?'* Lily closed her eyes and thought hard. *'Well, that's the easiest thing I can think of.'* She pulled her parchment and quill towards her and began writing, thinking of the way she needed to flick and twist her wand in order to get the rat to appear.

"Evans, I'm done!" Lily stared at the parchment that was being waved in her face.

"Can't you just wait?" Lily barked, nearly breaking her quill in half. She glared at Violet, but she didn't seem to mind.

"Can't you do anything right? McGonagall wants us to trade papers *now!*"

Lily quickly jotted down the last of her directions before snatching Violet's out of her hands. She stared at the parchment for a great deal of time before rolling her eyes. *'She doesn't even know half of the stuff she wrote down. She's just trying to make me fail...Well...I'll show her!'*

Lily absentmindedly rubbed her stomach as it growled. Using her right hand she followed the exact instructions on her parchment, even muttering the ridiculous incantation that was with it. She noticed that McGonagall was standing over her shoulder, so she made sure she followed the instructions to a tee.

The quill that Lily was using *exploded*.

Lily nearly fell out of her seat when a flame burst up from the quill, but she didn't move fast enough and her robes were singed. She waved her hand in front of her face trying to clear the air so she could breathe, and then looked up angrily at Violet who was smirking at her. A moment later a black rat scurried across the table, its fur on fire.

Lily quickly pointed her wand at the rat and water shot out of the end, drenching the rat.

"Poor thing...Maybe we should give that to Wormtail, eh?"

“What in the world happened Evans? Who’s instructions were you using, a first years?”

Lily felt hurt from McGonagall’s accusation, but she sniffed and shook her head. “I was using Violet’s, Professor.” Lily shakily handed the parchment to McGonagall, still a bit shaken up from the explosion. A moment after she handed them to McGonagall, she pointed a shaking finger at Violet.

“To Professor Dumbledore’s office now. You could have seriously injured the students in this classroom! Be prepared to have a meeting with your parents this evening.” McGonagall looked angrily at Violet as she stood there, her smirk gone from her face. “What are you waiting for? Go, now!”

Violet was gone a moment later, and Remus was cleaning up the acrid smoke that filled the air. During this confusion someone had opened a window, and the room almost instantly chilled. Lily pulled off her robes and looked at their singed front. Her hands were still shaking and she was trying not to cry, but it was hard. When Remus finished he looked at Lily. “You okay?”

“Fine,” Lily mumbled. She ran a hand across her eyes and continued fiddling with her robes. The rat that had been drenched crawled onto the robes and stared at Lily, twitching it’s nose at her. Lily change the rat back into a quill and set it aside, nearly flicking it away from her.

‘Why today of all days? I’m hungry, I was late...and now my robes are practically ruined.’ Lily shifted in her seat and took a deep breath. The door to the classroom slammed shut and everyone looked up. No one had noticed that McGonagall had left.

McGonagall was looking furious. Her lips were pursed in a tight line and her face was pale. “If *anyone* ever tries to do that again, you’ll be immediately expelled! A joke like that is *absolutely* unacceptable, and you’ll have to face the consequences. Understand?” She walked around to her desk and shuffled papers on them before looking up at her students. “I want a fourteen inch essay, don’t you dare make that face Potter, and it is due by the end of the day! If seventh year students don’t know how to act, then by Merlin I’ll teach you how. Class dismissed, Evans stay back.”

No one dared to make a sound as they packed up their supplies. There was nearly two whole quarters of class left, but no one said anything about it. If another Professor caught them in the corridor, then they'd just have to say that McGonagall released them early.

Lily sent James a sidelong glance, indicating that she wanted him to stay back for her, but James didn't seem to catch the look because he was in a deep discussion with Remus. She sighed and decided not to press the matter, she'd be able to walk to the Library on her own. *'Since class is over early, might as well get a head start on my N.E.W.T.'s studying.'*

She swallowed hard and stood up. She thought she stood up too fast because she felt dizzy again, so she braced herself against her desk. When the feeling was gone, she was the only student left in the classroom. She picked up her bag, grunting from the weight, and shuffled towards McGonagall's desk, wishing she didn't have to go to the Library. She felt as if her shoulder was about to fall off as she neared her desk. *'Was it always this heavy?'*

McGonagall sat down at her desk and eyed Lily wearily. "Are you all right?"

Lily nodded her head. "Fine Professor," she mumbled.

McGonagall sighed. "What possessed you to follow those directions?"

"She was acting like I couldn't do anything, so I just wanted to prove her wrong." Lily said. "Kind of stupid now that I think about it."

Lily didn't quite hear the response that McGonagall gave because someone had knocked on the door. The door was open, so Lily wasn't sure what was stopping the person from coming in. She swayed slightly on her feet and readjusted her bag. She shifted from one foot to another, thinking about skipping the Library altogether and taking a hot bath...her feet needed it at least.

"What is it Potter?"

Lily looked up. She didn't realized that it was James. "I was just looking for Lily."

Lily smiled at James and was about to say something when she felt extremely dizzy again. She swayed slightly and shifted the bag on her shoulder. Both McGonagall and James noticed the sway and James inched forward into the classroom. "Lily?"

Lily's knees buckled and she began falling forward. James quickly ran to her and caught her before she fell to the floor. "Lily, Lily, are you okay?"

"Fine," Lily murmured against his shoulder. She blinked rapidly against the darkness that was clouding her vision.

"Lily?" James voice was sounding distant. Before Lily's entire vision was clouded with the blackness, a jet of freezing cold water hit her face and it quickly brought her back to her senses.

"...Infirmary..." was all Lily managed to hear.

"I'm fine," Lily mumbled again. She lifted her head slightly. "Just tired."

"Really?" James asked, not convinced. "Did Violet do something to you?"

Lily somehow pushed herself off of James. "No she didn't. I'm fine, honest." She wiped the water off her face and gave James a not so reassuring smile.

McGonagall didn't seem entirely convinced either. "Are you sure you don't need to see Poppy?"

"No I don't." Lily swallowed audibly. She wasn't feeling very well, and maybe seeing Madame Pomfrey wasn't such a bad idea.

And that was the last thing she thought before she swayed and fell again, this time losing consciousness well before meeting James's arms.

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Chapter Nineteen: The Galleon

Lily opened her eyes, unsure where she was. All she knew was that the room was incredibly white and she had a pounding headache. She touched her head, wincing when her eyes became adjusted to the light. She closed her eyes quickly and slowly opened them, giving them time to actually adjust.

After a moment she began to panic, totally confused as to where she was. She was alone in a totally white room, well, there was a wooden chair beside the bed, and it contrasted greatly. She looked at the gown she was wearing and didn't recognize it. She had been in the Infirmary at Hogwarts before, and these were definitely not pajamas from the school, and besides, the Infirmary didn't have private rooms.

As the panic began to rise higher, she noticed that the doorknob on the other side of the room turn. She laid back down and pulled the blankets over her head. She heard the door open and her heart beat faster. She thought her heart was going to burst out of her chest and she felt like she couldn't breathe, that she wasn't getting enough oxygen into her lungs. She began gasping for breath and her headache felt like it doubled in pain.

"Lily?"

James pulled the blankets off of Lily's head and heard her gasps for breath. At first he wasn't sure if she had just gone into early labor, but then he recognized that she was having a panic attack; Remus had had one once, and it was pretty frightening when they tried to calm him down because they couldn't. It took only a few minutes for it to run its course, and by the end they were all exhausted. But he hadn't had one since then, and it happened when they were in fifth year before their first O.W.L.'s.

James pulled Lily into a sitting position and held her shoulders, lowering his gaze to hers. "Lily, just breathe...take normal breaths." He had seen the fear and confusion in her eyes, but thought better of asking her about it at that moment. It seemed like James's words didn't meet Lily's ears because she was still looking frightened.

Concerned that something serious could happen, James slowly began backing out of the room, talking the entire time. "Lily, I'm going to get help. Just try to breathe." He reached the door. "Breathe, okay love. Deep slow breaths...Try to calm down." He opened the door and left, leaving it open.

Lily's eyes shifted around the room. Her chest was hurting from her breathing and she was beginning to feel dizzy. *'I'm somewhere with James...I'm somewhere with James...'* Lily kept saying this in her head, and by the time James returned with Lily's Healer, her breathing had slowed just slightly.

"Lily, can you hear me?" her Healer asked. It wasn't Madame Jacobs, but it was a woman who looked just as nice. Lily recognized the blue robes and almost immediately she felt her fear slipping away. She wasn't somewhere where someone could hurt her, she was at St. Mungo's, and James was with her, along with a nice Healer. Lily nodded her head. She took a deep shaky breath and held it for just a second, and then exhaled slowly. She repeated this a few times and soon she felt like she could breathe again. "I'll just check your heart rate," the Healer said, pulling out something that looked like a stethoscope.

Lily held still as she put the round end against her chest and listened. She couldn't bear to meet James's gaze, so she just looked at the Healer in front of her.

"Do you have a history of panic attacks or panic disorders?" the Healer asked after removing the stethoscope.

Lily shook her head. "No...I've never had one before."

"Are you having any chest pains or dizziness? Any unusual chills or a strange prickling feeling in your hands and feet?"

"Chest pains," Lily said. "But I just started to have them...when I felt like I couldn't breathe."

The Healer nodded her head just slightly. "Well you had a panic attack, that's for sure. Do you know what triggered it? There not uncommon in pregnancy mind you."

Lily was quiet a moment. She thought back to when she woke up that morning. Then she whispered, "I didn't know where I was...I don't even know why I'm here or what happened."

The Healer nodded her head. "There's nothing to be ashamed about. It happens occasionally during a pregnancy when you're under a lot of stress, which by the workload your doing at Hogwarts, I wouldn't be surprised if stress was a regular occurrence for you."

Lily just nodded her head. The Healer smiled reassuringly at Lily, even though she wasn't very reassured, and walked towards the door. "Madame Jacobs is here to check on you for your regular appointment, so you'll just have to hang in here for a little bit longer."

The Healer left, leaving Lily and James alone. Lily played with the hem of her blanket, not wanting to look at James. James sat down beside her, making her jump just slightly. He wrapped an arm around her shoulder and kissed her cheek. "I love you, you know."

Lily smiled and nodded her head, feeling a lot happier. "Yeah I know."

"Are you feeling better?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "I didn't mean to have that panic attack, honest. It's just...I had no idea where I was. I don't remember coming here or anything."

"That's because you passed out *twice* in McGonagall's class yesterday morning."

"Twice? Yesterday morning? What time is it now?"

James looked at his watch. "Nearly four o'clock."

Lily looked surprised. "I slept for that long?"

James nodded his head. "You didn't eat anything yesterday and all your food and energy that was left in your body went to the baby, so you basically passed out from exhaustion. When you got here, after the initial testing, they put you on a Muggle IV, because they're not harmless, and gave you stuff to eat or something...through the

needle.” James paused and ran a nervous hand through his hair. “I didn’t know what was going on...I was really scared that Violet did something to you...”

Tears clouded her vision as Lily turned towards James, wrapping her arms around him tightly. “I’m sorry I scared you. I’m better now.”

“I know.” James hugged Lily tightly. “Merlin...I’m so happy you are now.”

“Is the baby okay?” Lily asked, pulling away slightly. She rubbed furiously at her eyes.

“The baby is fine, heart and lungs in perfect condition, and hungry as ever.” James smiled at Lily. “Don’t rub at your eyes, you’ll make them red, and you’re adorable when you cry.”

Lily slapped his hand. “No I’m not, don’t say that.”

James just smiled cheekily at her, and she glared at him. At first James thought she was serious, but then Lily lunged for him and began tickling him mercilessly. James shrieked and tried to get away without hurting Lily. After a moment he realized that that was a useless tact, and he tried to tickle Lily back.

“James don’t you dare! I’ll pee myself if you tickle me,” Lily said, grabbing his wrists with both her hands. She was nearly laying on top of him, breathless.

James was quiet a moment, and then he easily slipped his hand out of her grasp. He grabbed her right hand and looked at it. “Did you *really* like this ring? Honestly?”

Lily looked at the ring and then smiled at James. “I don’t think *like* accurately describes it.”

“Really?” James asked questioningly.

Lily smiled. “The best *almost* engagement ring I’ve ever had.” They hadn’t talked about the ring since Christmas, and they never talked

about what was in the letter. James's features softened almost immediately. Lily leaned down and kissed James quickly on the lips.

When they pulled away, James still held Lily close. "Who else has *almost* proposed to you?" Lily looked questioningly at James. "You said this was the best *almost* engagement ring you've ever gotten. That has to mean someone else has proposed."

"You know what I meant," Lily said, pulling out of James's embrace and sitting up. He laid beside her a moment. "How'd we managed to fit on this small bed and roll around?"

James shrugged his shoulders. He sat up and rested his head on her shoulder and pulled her to him, wrapping his arms around her middle. "I don't know...I don't care."

Lily and James just sat for a few moments in complete silence, James gently stroking Lily's hand. Lily leaned her head against his chest and felt like she could drift off to sleep when someone knocked on the door. James fell off the bed and scrambled into the chair beside it. Lily tried not to laugh. "Come in," she called to the person who was knocking on the door.

The door opened and Madame Jacobs walked in. She took one look at Lily's sparkling eyes and James's tousled hair, and didn't want to know what was happening before she came in. "Well," she said, walking towards Lily's bed. She lifted Lily's chin and looked into her eyes. "I heard you had a panic attack earlier."

Lily nodded her head. "I know what triggered it too."

"And you have no history of panic attacks?" she asked, putting a finger in front of Lily's face. "Follow my finger."

"No I don't have a history of panic attacks," Lily said, resisting the urge to just move her head to follow her finger.

Madame Jacobs smiled. "We've already done enough testing in the passed twenty-four hours, and I don't want you to be exhausted by the end of the day, so we'll just reschedule your appointment to test

you for gestational diabetes.” Lily nodded her head. “But we can check for the sex of the baby if you want to.”

“Five months already?” Lily asked, surprised. “It’s really been five months?”

“A little over to be exact,” Madame Jacobs said. “Do you want to know what you’re having so you can prepare or do you want to have a surprise?”

Lily looked at James, and he smiled and tilted his head just slightly, indicating that it was her decision. Lily chewed on her bottom lip for a moment and then nodded her head. “I want to know.”

“Okay,” Madame Jacobs said. “This’ll be just like your other sonograms, except it’ll be here instead of at Hogwarts.” Lily nodded her head. “I’ll find some pajama bottoms for you to put on, and then I’ll show you to the room you need to be in, okay?”

“Yeah,” Lily said. She was beginning to feel a bit giddy. James got up from his chair and sat down on the edge of the bed. Madame Jacobs smiled and left the room, leaving the two of them alone.

“I’ll bet you a galleon we’re having a girl.”

Lily rolled her eyes. “This baby has an appetite like you. It’s a boy.”

“I don’t think so,” James replied.

Lily held out her hand. “You’re on.”

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Lily held onto James’s arm as she walked down the corridor, following Madame Jacobs. Since she had been in bed for the passed day and a half and she was still a bit low on energy, she was unstable on her feet. They had been walking for nearly two minutes when Madame Jacobs stopped and indicated that they go into the room with the open door. When they walked in it was dark, but there was enough light from the hallway to see where they were going. Lily saw a bed and she walked towards it.

“Yes, that’s where you sit,” Madame Jacobs said, shutting the door behind her. The room was dark for a second, and then the only blank wall in the room lit up. “I already put the spell on the wall, all I need for you to do is relax like always. It’ll take a bit longer than it usually does at Hogwarts.”

Madame Jacobs pulled out her wand, and Lily pulled up her shirt to above her protruding stomach. James had never seen Lily when she took a sonogram, so his interest was piqued. A moment later Madame Jacobs handed Lily a florescent vial. “That’s just to make the picture clearer and a good dose of her prenatal vitamins James. No harm will be done to Lily or the baby.”

Lily drank it, licking her lips afterwards. That potion was always flavored like blue raspberries. When Lily settled back down into the bed, Madame Jacobs tapped her stomach and muttered an incantation. Then she pointed at the wall with her wand, and a picture of the baby appeared on the wall.

“That’s it?” James asked, leaning closer to the wall. He was in awe at how he realized that the little thing in Lily’s stomach was actually alive. He could see the little heart beat, and he could hear it too. He turned back to Lily and saw that she was smiling fondly at him. He smiled back.

“Well, to be precise, it’s a girl,” Madame Jacobs said.

“A girl?” James asked.

“A girl?” Lily repeated. “With an appetite like that?”

“It’s a girl. See right there,” Madame Jacobs said, pointing to the picture. “That’s how you can tell.”

All of a sudden Lily burst into tears. “We’re having a girl!” she cried, covering her face. “We’re having a girl.”

James smiled. “You owe me a galleon.”

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Chapter Twenty: Dancing

James kept a close eye on Lily as the days passed. Not just because he was worried about her first panic attack and how she was going to react to it, but also to make sure she ate a good breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks in between. He also watched the workload that she carried and helped her with anything that she needed. He had even taken some time out of Marauding to read a book on N.E.W.T.'s and take exceptionally well notes on it for Lily so she didn't have to read it.

She had been slightly annoyed at first, well actually, she had been totally annoyed and was furious beyond words when James pulled her from the Library during lunch so she could eat, but after James kept explaining to her exactly what and why he was doing this, she calmed down. Now she appreciated the fact that she didn't have to do *everything* on her own.

It was nearing seven o'clock in the morning when James snuck out of the seventh years dorm, the other Marauders in tow behind him. They hadn't pulled a *good* prank in ages, and they were getting a bit restless.

"Only Severus, okay?" Remus said, getting under the invisibility cloak and holding it open for the three others. "He shouldn't have pranked the first years in Gryffindor, but we can't punish the entire house, besides, James has Head Duties and Lily to think about."

"Right Remus," Sirius said, getting under the cloak. "You take the fun out of everything."

James and Peter got under the cloak, and slowly the four of them made their way out of the Gryffindor Common Room. As they were walking down the stairs and towards the dungeons, Sirius stopped.

"Lily might give us detentions."

It was quiet for a moment, and then they whipped off the invisibility cloak. James folded it and stuffed it in Peter's school bag.

After realizing how much the four of them were going to get in trouble by Lily, the prank that they were going to play seemed to disappear totally from their minds. Just thinking about getting a detention from Lily made James shiver. She would have him clean every lavatory with a toothbrush and a bar of soap. He didn't even want to think of what she would make the Marauders do, because she would have let him off lightly with the lavatory toothbrush thing, but the other Marauders...

She'd more than likely kill them.

"Well that ruined the mood," Peter said quietly.

"Pretty much," Remus said. They walked towards the Great Hall in silence, contemplating which was worse, getting caught by McGonagall or Lily.

When they reached the Great Hall, they were surprised to see a great majority of the students eating breakfast. What was really strange was that it was Sunday, and usually everyone slept in until noon, except for the choice few who liked to be up early. They walked to the Gryffindor table and sat in their normal spot, the poor first year still sitting beside Sirius. But this morning Sirius was so gloomy about not pulling the prank that he didn't even bother to give the first year advice about how to kill himself. He just ignored him.

"You guys are looking a bit blue," Elizabeth said, stopping by Remus. Remus just shrugged his shoulder.

"We were going to play a prank, but we thought about how Lily was going to punish us, and we changed our minds."

"Rightly so. She was really sick this morning. She's sleeping now though," Elizabeth said. "I think Alice might still be sitting with her though."

James dropped his fork that was halfway to his mouth. "She was sick? Is she okay now? What kind of sick?"

"Morning sickness," Elizabeth said, an eyebrow arched. "You haven't been on her arse about her health have you?"

James shifted slightly. "Er, maybe?"

"Of course you were. That's why she was yelling at Alice and me this morning. You know, she doesn't need you to watch every move she makes. She's done pretty good for the past six years, and when she's not around you, she still makes good decisions about her health and internally she knows when to stop, even if she doesn't want to." Elizabeth put her hands on her hips, enjoying the small scolding she was giving James. But by the look on his face, she knew that she had put just a wee bit too much guilt on him. "But I'm sure she appreciates the help that you give her. Just...don't be on her arse like you have been, that's all."

James nodded her head. "You said she was sleeping?"

Elizabeth nodded her head. "She'll probably sleep the afternoon away."

xoXoXoXox

It was nearing three o'clock when James walked up the boys dormitory staircase with a sandwich wrapped in a paper napkin. He opened the door to his room and was surprised to see Lily half awake, books and parchments spread out around her. She was still in her pajamas and her hair was a mess. She looked up when he stepped into the room.

"Afternoon," Lily said around a yawn. She patted a space on the corner of the bed. It was the only place that wasn't surrounded with books. When James neared his bed he saw a bowl and two plates on the floor. He smiled and shook his head.

"Thought you could use a sandwich," he said, handing her the napkin present. "Roast beef with peppers and onions."

"Ooh! Yummy," Lily said, taking the sandwich. She took a bite out of it and made another sound of pleasure from her sandwich. "Best sandwich ever."

James laughed. "How long have you been up?"

Lily shrugged her shoulders. "An hour or so."

James sat down on the corner of the bed. "I was wondering if you're doing anything tonight?"

Lily thought for a moment, taking another bite from her sandwich. Then she shook her head. "Not that I know of, no. Well, I have head duties and what not, but that's normal isn't it?" James just nodded his head, surprised at how awake she suddenly seemed. "Why?" she asked.

"Oh, I was just wondering...we haven't been on a *real* date yet," James looked up to see Lily's sparkling eyes. "I just wanted to know if you wanted to...I don't know, hang out and maybe go to dinner?"

"Go to dinner?" Lily asked skeptically.

"Yeah, and all in the comfort of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry."

"How many rules will we be breaking?"

James winced slightly. "Enough?" Knowing that that wasn't an acceptable answer for Lily, he sat and waited for her rejection. They were *almost* engaged, so they *really* didn't have to go on dates.

"Oh, I guess."

"You guess?" James asked, surprised.

Lily shrugged her shoulders, taking another bite of her sandwich. "I mean, we're Head Students, so we have a later curfew, it won't be that late will it?"

"I can ask the sixth year Prefects to cover for us, that way we can have an earlier evening since we have classes tomorrow." James was hoping that Lily would agree. He knew how much she hated leaving her duties for the younger students. "I'm sure we can cover for them when they need it."

"Only if they have a good excuse," Lily said.

“Is our excuse good?” James asked cheekily.

Lily laughed slightly. “Not really, no.”

“So do you want to?”

Lily nodded her head. “Sure...yeah, it would be fun.” James smiled. “What should I wear? A dress? Pants? Nothing--”

“Wearing nothing would seem a bit awkward, don’t you think?” James asked. Lily rolled her eyes at him. “A dress would do fine. Do you even have a dress? I’ve never really noticed.”

“I bought one on the last Hogsmeade trip. Alice insisted. She said I’d never know if I’d need one.”

“Well, now you do.”

“I don’t know it’ll fit...an enlarging charm might work.”

James just nodded his head. “Well...I guess I’ll leave you to study and whatnot.”

Lily smiled at him. “Guess so. I’ll see you later, yeah?”

“Course,” James said, standing up. He kissed Lily lightly on the forehead and then he was off, leaving her alone.

Lily shook her head slowly and returned to her studying. *‘That boy sometimes...’*

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‘Oh, I don’t think the enlarging charm worked much, even though the dress isn’t supposed to be baggy.’ Lily turned slightly and stared at her reflection in the mirror. *‘It shows every curve on my body...I don’t quite like it.’* She turned again and shook her head. *‘It’ll do though. He did say a dress.’* She looked down at her feet, sighing. *‘And flip flops? How does black represent spring and summer? It’s the hottest color in the world and here I am, wearing it...and I only have black flip flops to match with the dress...Goodness, I need to go shopping more...’*

She walked towards her bed and picked up her discarded wand. Then she walked back to the mirror. She had already brushed her hair, but it just wasn't cooperating. She tapped her head and almost instantly her hair became straight, falling well passed her shoulders. *'I never use that spell...'* She wrinkled her nose. *'Violet taught it to me in third year...prat.'*

She turned again, running a hand down her stomach. *'I'm not that large yet. I'm only in my fifth month...But this baby needs to be born!'* She ran a hand down her side. *'I hate these aches and pains that come along with the pregnancy.'*

She went to the door and opened it slowly. She was surprised that the Marauders and Frank had left her alone for so long. *'Especially James. He's been on me as if I'd pass out any minute. I'm pregnant, not someone who is bleeding to death.'* She smiled softly as she held onto the banister and walked down the steps. *'But he is a lot more bearable when he's concerned, instead of being the prat he was last year...Maybe being concerned is a good thing...just not on my arse.'*

There must have been a party or something of the sort going on in the Gryffindor Common Room because the talking volume was insanely loud. She walked into the Common Room and everyone was in there, from first years to the seventh years. They didn't notice Lily as she walked passed them, and she could smell the distinct odor of alcohol. When she reached James she arched an eyebrow at him. He shrugged his shoulders.

"Padfoot said he'll keep an eye on them," he said, shrugging his shoulders again.

"You sure? I don't want to come back and see half the house passed out and the other half dead because them were too intoxicated to figure how far the ground was from the windows."

"Oh Lily, just trust me," Sirius pouted.

Lily turned to see Remus smiling fondly at her, shaking his head. "I'm still trying to figure how Prongs got to be Head Boy in the first place, he lacks in the area of common sense." He smirked at James. James laughed, rolling his eyes at him.

“Okay, I just wanted to make sure.”

“Don’t worry,” Sirius said, his pout disappearing, “I’ll watch the little children.”

“I hope that wasn’t supposed to be reassuring, because it didn’t help any,” Lily said, putting her hands on her hips. The Marauders laughed.

“Come on Lily, we best leave before we get sucked into the party.” James grabbed her hand and began leading her out of the Common Room, trying to ignore the advice that Sirius was sending him.

“Be careful! You know how Lily got pregnant the *last time!*” he called before the portrait closed.

Lily and James walked through the corridor quietly. James was concentrating about where they were going to go, and Lily was wondering where they were going to go. She didn’t want to go outside, that was for sure. It was January and there was still snow on the ground.

“Hmm?” Lily asked, surprised that James was speaking to her. She looked at him, and he was trying not to laugh.

“I said you look rather dashing tonight.”

“Oh,” Lily responded. “Thank you. You don’t look half bad either.” She eyed James, noticing what he was wearing. It was a dark green button down shirt tucked into a pair of dress slacks. “You actually know how to clean up well, I’m proud.”

“Haha, funny,” James said sarcastically. “I actually got this today. I realized that I didn’t have anything appropriate to wear, and robes were really out of the question.”

Lily nodded her head. “Where exactly are we going? We haven’t gone down any staircases.”

“We’re not leaving Hogwarts. I told you we’ll be in the school the entire time, or at least that’s what you’ll have to believe.”

“Believe?” Lily asked questioningly. James didn’t reply. He just squeezed her hand and continued down the corridor. Lily sighed and just followed. It was several minutes later when James dropped her hand and began pacing back and forth in front of a tapestry.

Lily was just beginning to take in the fact that she hadn’t seen that particular tapestry, when James grabbed her hand. Lily looked in the direction that James was pulling her to, and was surprised to see a door. “That wasn’t there a moment ago,” she said, trying to put her heels into the floor so she could stop. Her flip flops held no friction, and she just slid forward, almost falling.

“I know.” James winked at Lily, and turned towards the door. “Lillian Evans, welcome to the Room of Requirement, where you’ll be happy to know there’s no snow outside.

Lily gasped when he opened the door. She followed James through the doorway and looked at the sky. It was dark outside and the moon and stars were showing brightly. There was a slight breeze, but it was comforting. There was a blanket and basket underneath a willow tree and a couch to the far left of the tree. She quirked an eyebrow at James, and he just smiled.

“Incase you can’t get comfortable on the ground,” he replied. He walked towards the basket and Lily followed, awestruck at how everything in the room seemed so real.

“We’re not really outside, are we?” she asked, staring at the sky. The moon and stars seemed real enough. She could even see a shooting star moving across it.

“No, we’re still in the school. Come sit beside me. I’m starting to get hungry.”

Lily sat down on the blanket. “Where’d you think of this? Of all the things we could do on a first date...”

“Well, we’ve done *everything else* before the first date, so why not just continue on?” James asked. He opened the basket and began pulling out the food. Lily stared as the strangest things came out of

the basket. It was only strange because they were all Muggle food and it was all of her favorites.

"I've never had this before," James said. He held up a bottle of black liquid. "How do you say it, Pep-sigh?"

Lily laughed. She shook her head. "Pepsi, it's a carbonated soda."

"Soda?" James asked. "Isn't that used to bake with? When you add carbon to soda, you get...this?" James tilted his head and stared at the bottle. "Strange," he ended up saying, shaking his head.

Lily shook her head. "Not that kind of soda. They also call it pop."

"Pop? Does it explode?"

"Well, kind of," Lily said, reaching for a cup from the basket. "Twist the cap."

James twisted the cap and gasped in surprise. The bottle fizzed and made a strange sound. He looked at Lily, his eyes open wide. "Is it supposed to do that? This soda is dangerous."

"No it's not, just drink some," Lily said. She handed him a cup and he poured himself barely a teaspoon of the drink. He cautiously took a sip, his brow furrowing as he swallowed it. "It's not a wine James, you don't need to swish it around your mouth," Lily said, giggling as he poured himself another, larger cup.

"I like it," was James's only comment.

After a while of James cautiously pouring himself cup after cup, they began to eat. Lily hadn't had a Mars bar and crisps together in a long time, and she was just giddy. She loved it when she could have a meal of just random Muggle food.

"If I don't stop, my bladder will explode," James said, drinking his fifth cup of soda. Lily just nodded her head, her mouth full of chocolate. When she swallowed, she looked serious.

"We're going to get sick."

“I agree.”

She smiled and ran her tongue across her teeth, getting the food off of them. They sat in silence for a few minutes, and then James stood up. “Let’s dance,”

“Dance?” Lily echoed, looking up at James. He just nodded his head and pulled Lily to her feet. “Dance to what?”

“Music of course,” James said, and a moment later music filled the air. James wrapped his arms around her waist and turned her until her back was to his chest. They just slowly swayed to the music, their eyes drifting closed as they enjoyed the moment.

James sighed quietly. After six years of being after this woman, he finally had her in his arms, and they were dancing. ‘*We’re almost engaged and I’ve met her family, she’s met mine...*’ He rested his chin on her head and tightened his grip on her waist.

“What are you thinking about?” Lily asked softly.

“You,” James murmured quietly. “And Christmas and your family and mine and about how this year has been totally barmy,” he added quietly.

“Oh.” Lily looked up at James. “It has been quite a year hasn’t it?” James nodded his head in response. “But we don’t know each other as well as some people who are in the same position as us, or at least engaged.”

James opened his eyes to look at Lily. “What do you mean?” He was a bit surprised that she had dropped the *almost*.

“Like, what were your parents like, and why my sister can’t stand magic...things like that...and the little things...Usually people who-”

“We’re not usual people Lily,” James whispered, kissing her forehead. He could feel and hear the small sigh that escaped her lips. He knew she wasn’t satisfied with his answer, so he began to unravel his own story. “My parents were Aurors and they passed away around Christmas when I was in my first year. I’ve been living with my

grandparents since then.” James whispered softly. “My parents were wonderful people, and I really wish you got to meet them. The other Marauders met them over the holiday and when they passed I had stayed with Sirius for the rest of the holiday. My mum had black hair, as did my dad, but my mum was the one with unruly hair, believe it or not. But she managed to control it, unlike me.” He smiled softly into Lily’s hair. “My dad was a genius and loved to play chess, gobstones, and quidditch. He bought me my first broom when I was seven. Best broom I ever had. I wish I could still ride it, but it would snap in half with my weight.”

Lily closed her eyes, imagining what James’s parents would look like. Immediately she saw the loving and caring looks his grandparents had, mixed with a younger looking James and a black haired woman.

“They seemed like wonderful people.”

“Merlin...they were,” James whispered.

Lily looked at James. “Petunia can’t abide magic.”

James snorted, ducking from Lily’s swatting hand. “Obviously.”

“She just can’t stand changes or a difference amongst the normal, but what Vernon did at dinner...She’s never *that* rude...What he did was uncalled for in both our books. As Muggles, we respect the dead, the same as wizards do, and she knew that. Sometimes I just don’t understand why she’s with him. I mean, she’s not terribly ugly,” James snorted again, just barely missing Lily’s swatting hand. “Anyway, she isn’t terribly ugly, so why’d she pick him?”

“The same reason you picked me,” James whispered. “I’m just irresistible.”

“Not with that attitude,” Lily commented, turning around to look James in the eyes. He stared at her a moment, and then leaned down and kissed her.

James smiled when they pulled apart. “You’re magnificent, Lillian Evans,” he breathed, pulling her into a hug. “Absolutely magnificent.”

Lily smiled. "Goodness, stop flattering me. I'll be about the same color as a tomato if you don't stop."

James smiled and pulled away slightly. "I don't want to leave this room." The look that Lily was giving him made him flush a deep red color. "Not like that Lily, I meant...I just want to be here, with you and no distractions."

Lily smiled and grabbed his hand, pulling him to the couch. She pushed him onto it and laughed at his shocked scream. Then she sat down and curled up beside him, tucking her head underneath his chin. She kicked her flip flops off and watched as James untucked his shirt.

"If you need to use the lavatory, just think about a lavatory and one will just appear." James whispered, running a hand through her hair.

"Thanks for telling me. I'm sure I'll need to use one soon," Lily replied, blinking her eyes tiredly. James looked at Lily and shook his head.

"You go to sleep way to early."

"I have no energy left!" Lily said, mock glaring at him. "I'd like to see you carry around a ton of extra weight with barely any bladder power, a barmy kicking in your stomach, and insane cravings. I wonder how long you'd last."

"Probably two minutes. Don't even begin to talk about labor." James shuddered. "It sounds just about horrible with the pushing and the pain." He kissed her forehead. "I'm glad women are so strong, because I'd never be able to handle it."

Lily smiled. "Thank you."

James kissed her one last time before wrapping his arms around her and shifting until he was comfortable. Lily was now basically on top of him, but he didn't mind. "G'night Lily."

"Night," she whispered, resting her head on his chest again.

The two of them fell asleep rather quickly, having an early night to their first date.

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Chapter Twenty-One: Distance

Lily rubbed her stomach absentmindedly as she trudged down the corridor and to the Library. It was a cold and snowy Wednesday morning, and double Herbology was canceled, which left Lily more time to study for her N.E.W.T.'s. She hadn't been doing too well with her studying schedule with all the disruptions, like passing out, the panic attack, the date, and Head Duties, but now she was determined to get at least a little bit of studying done.

When she reached the Library she smiled in relief. Her favorite table towards the back was void of people and there was barely anyone in the Library at all. She walked to the table and sat down, putting her bag beside her. She opened it and pulled out her notes. '*I left off with Conjuring Charms I think...*' She said, flipping through her neatly dated notes. She looked for the most recent page. '*I was right, Conjuring Charms.*' She read through her notes, falling into the usual calm she had when studying.

Deep in thought, she didn't notice when a first year slid into a seat across from her. They cleared their throat quietly and that broke Lily's concentration almost immediately. She lowered her notes and smiled pleasantly at the first year. "What can I do for you?"

"Er...I heard that you are exceptionally well in Charms, and I need a bit of help with my homework." The little girl blushed and looked at Lily hopefully.

Lily's pride swelled just a bit. '*I can never get over when they ask me for help.*' "Of course I can. What exactly are you doing?"

Lily never thought this would take up her entire morning that she planned for studying, but it did. The poor first year actually had no idea what she was doing, but Lily didn't pity her, she just taught her what she was doing wrong and what to fix it. She also helped her with an essay and wand movement.

By the time Lily finished, she realized she had to leave immediately or else be late to Charms herself. She gathered her things quickly and walked with the first year because they were going in the same general direction. The first year was thanking and apologizing to Lily

tremendously. Lily just told her it was alright and they parted ways at Flitwicks classroom. She walked in and made her way to a desk.

"Where were you this morning?" James asked, looking at Lily. He had a feeling she was going to sit with Alice and Elizabeth, because she hadn't been around him in days.

"Library," Lily replied, doing exactly what James thought she was going to do. She sat between Alice and Elizabeth, grinning as they each hugged her.

"You're doing too much work Lily, we need to get together soon," Elizabeth said, not finishing one thought before making another. She patted Lily's stomach. "And goodness, that baby will be popping out some time soon!"

Lily rubbed her stomach. "I wish. All she's doing is kicking and wanting to eat. I feel fat- very round from eating so much." The girls erupted into giggles as Lily fixed her mistake. Then they began talking about the next Hogsmeade trip, and what they were doing. Lily and James had decided that they were going to go shopping for things together during the morning on Saturday, and then split up and hang with their respected group of friends.

"Prongs, you okay?"

James looked up from his hands. He seemed to have been concentrating hard because it took him a moment to focus on Remus and answer him. "Fine. Perfect. Why?"

Remus cocked his head to the side. "I was just wondering. You looked a little out of it, that's all."

James shook his head. In actuality he was a bit concerned about Lily. He had almost immediately picked up on her discomfort and her lack of sleep; all she did was roll around at night and try to find a comfortable position. He had thought about offering her the entire bed and sleeping on the floor. A four poster wasn't the largest bed for two people, one of whom was pregnant, to sleep on. But he knew she would get a bit iffy with him for being too concerned. He had already

got a talking to from Lily and Elizabeth, both on separate occasions of course.

James jumped as the door to the classroom slammed shut. It seemed like Flitwick wasn't in a good mood because he was stomping his way to the stack of books on his chair. He climbed up on his chair and stood on his desk, looking at his classroom. His features seemed to melt as he looked at his students. "Well, good morning students."

"Morning," the students chorused.

"Pass in your homework and get your text books out. We'll be doing a bit of a review before your test."

Almost everyone groaned. They had forgotten about the test that Flitwick insisted that they have. Almost everyone except for Lily. She had written it down on the top of her studying schedule. She smiled and reached for her bag, pulling out her text book. Elizabeth nudged her in the side and asked for her homework. Lily also pulled that out of her bag and handed it to Elizabeth, who took it up to Flitwick.

"Stop smiling as if you remembered we had a quiz," Alice hissed, nudging Lily on the other arm. Lily's smile grew larger and she and Alice tried to smother their giggles.

It felt good to be with her friends during classes again.

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"Are you writing a book?"

Lily looked up. She had to give him some credit. James hadn't bothered her at all that day and now it was almost time to go to bed. He must have been wanting to go to bed because he was in his pajamas and was looking quite tired. Maybe another reason why he hadn't bothered her was because they had a gruesome quidditch practice. He had a few bumps and bruises on his arms and legs.

"No, I'm just redoing notes for the sixth year prefects because they started a study group, and I'm also redoing my own notes for McGonagall and Slughorn because there a bit messy and I need to

add a bit more to them. I also have to do my Ancient Runes homework because it's due on Tuesday, but Monday night I'm overseeing a study group and--"

"Isn't that a bit much?" James asked. "You'll be up for hours."

"It's only a chart and twelve short answer questions James. It'll take a moment to do."

"But what about your other things? And how come you've been acting so distant?"

Before Lily could process the two different questions, James began packing up her things. "What are you doing?" Lily hissed.

"I'm going to go to bed, and I wouldn't mind if you joined me."

"Sleep on your own side of the bed!"

James stepped back and looked at his bed. Lily's things were sprawled out all around her and her legs were nearly straddling the sides. The only place where she wasn't, or her things, on his bed was a small corner between his pillows and wall. "I can't fit there Lily, sorry."

"Well," Lily said, watching as he continued to pack away her things. "Don't do that James! I'm not done yet."

James glared at Lily and then reached over her, ripping a pillow and the blanket that was folded in the corner beside the pillows off the bed. "If I bloody can't sleep on my own effing bed, I'll just sleep on the floor!" He ignored Lily's comment on swearing and threw his things on the floor. He sat down and unfolded his blanket, curling up and trying to go to sleep.

Lily huffed quietly and began working on her notes for the sixth years. She didn't get very far before her vision was clouded by tears. She tried in vain reading what she wrote, but when she failed at that, she slammed her books rather miserably and put them away. She stared at her homework planner that she got from McGonagall rather lamely. She had so much homework, but now she didn't feel very up to doing

it anymore. She peeked over the side of the bed and looked at James.
“James?”

He grunted in reply.

“James, I’m sorry. I’m just tired of you mollycoddling me!”

James threw the blankets off his head and stared at Lily, exasperated.
“What is so wrong with me caring about you?” he demanded.

“It’s just--”

“It’s just nothing! I don’t treat you like you’re going to break. All I want to do is make sure you eat and you don’t over do yourself, but every time I bloody try to say something, you’re biting my head off!”

Lily huffed, knowing she was wrong.

“Now what is wrong with you?” He looked at Lily in the eyes and watched as they flashed dangerously. “Why have you been distant with me and hiding behind your work and Alice and Elizabeth?”

Lily tried to keep her angry front up, but it wasn’t working. She felt her resolve breaking. “I’m just tired of sitting around here doing nothing! I’m Head Girl, James--”

James got on his knees and looked at Lily, an eyebrow arched. “There has not been one day that you haven’t done something to benefit this school Lily. And you need to remember that too much work will put you back in the hospital. Why don’t you lay some responsibility on me instead of packing it all on yourself?”

Lily shrugged her shoulders. “I don’t know,” she mumbled. She hastily wiped at her eyes and looked at James. “I just hate doing nothing.”

“Just think of all the things you’ll be doing when the baby’s born,” James said. “Think of what we’ll be doing, to be more truthful.” he added, smiling at Lily. He leaned up and wiped away her tears. She smiled at him.

“I’m sorry,” Lily said, pulling James on to the bed.

“And since we’re on this subject,” James said, looking at Lily. “How’ve you been feeling?”

“Cumbersome,” Lily said, patting her stomach. “All I do is hurt nowadays.” James looked a little worried and Lily quickly shook her head, putting a soothing hand on his arm. “Normal pregnancy pains James, nothing new.”

“Are you sure?” James asked.

Lily nodded her head. “I can distinguish between extreme pain and these regular ones. If I hurt that bad then I’d tell you, honest.” James kissed Lily lightly on the cheek. “But you know in less than four months the baby will be born. I counted it up and I’m already twenty-six weeks.”

James grinned. “Brilliant.” He kissed her cheek again and then crawled into his bed. “You know you still owe me a galleon,” he whispered, pulling the blankets back so he could get under them. Lily climbed off the bed and walked towards the bathroom.

“Whatever James. That wasn’t a fair bet. I wasn’t prepared for the prospect of having a girl.” She watched James shrug his shoulders and then she shut the bathroom door.

James laughed and waited for Lily to come back to bed before he pulled the blankets back. “Hurry it’s cold!”

A moment later Lily walked out of the bathroom. She climbed into bed. “Where’re the Marauders?” she asked sleepily, resting her head on James’s chest.

“Up and about probably...Well Sirius is in the Prefects bath...I gave him the password.”

“Why do you schedule really tough practices?” Lily asked, looking at James.

James grinned slowly. “We missed a bunch of time in October and we *still* have to be in top shape for the Quidditch finals later in the year.”

“Whatever,” Lily mumbled before drifting off to sleep.

James pointed his wand at the lights in the room and whispered, “Nox.” before pulling the hangings shut and falling asleep.

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Chapter Twenty-Two: Illegal...What?

"I don't really want to go to Zonkos."

The Marauders gasped and Sirius turned around to look at Remus, wide-eyed. "You *don't* want to go? Are you feeling okay?" Sirius reached out to feel Remus's head, but Remus ducked away, growling slightly.

"It's just the full moon," Remus muttered.

"You just *growled* at me."

Sirius began pestering Remus about his decision, but then James put his hand on Sirius's shoulders and pulled him away from Remus. "Padfoot, tomorrow's the full moon. Why don't we give him some time to just sit? He does a lot of moving around at school you know."

"You're really used to talking to Lily, aren't you?" Sirius asked, cocking an eyebrow at James. "But I guess you're right." He turned away from James and looked at Remus. "You can spend some quality time with Lily."

James sent Sirius a wary glance.

"It's not like they're dating," Sirius joked. "Merlin! Why is everyone suddenly taking me seriously?"

"They're taking you seriously? The apocalypse must've happened." The Marauders turned to see Elizabeth and Lily, both wrapped from head to toe in hats, gloves, scarves, and layers of clothing underneath their cloaks.

"Warm enough?" Sirius asked.

"It's cold out," Lily said simply.

"And we're being prepared."

"We can tell."

"Girl's are barmy," James said, winking at Lily. Lily rolled her eyes.

“You’re having one James, so you better not jinx us or she’ll turn out just as barmy as all of us put together.”

“I don’t want that to happen.”

“Well, are you two done? Some of use would like to go to Zonkos this century.”

“Shut up Padfoot. Come on let’s go.”

xoXoXoXox

Lily wasn’t sure how exactly she and Remus wound up in the small teashop across from all the other teashops in Hogsmeade. But this one seemed worse than all the others because it’s intoxicating smell of--well, Lily wasn’t even sure of the name of the intoxicating smells, but she was sure that Remus felt just as awkward in this shop as she did. There were couples surrounding them, and they were being incredibly close because of the holiday. February 14th...and Lily was spending it with her fiancé’s best friend.

Lily snorted at the thought of James being her fiancé. Remus arched an eyebrow at her, and Lily sobered. “Is James my fiancé?”

Remus thought for a moment, and a couple at a nearby table sent Lily a disgusted look, but she didn’t notice it. Remus did, but didn’t say anything about it. Maybe this conversation could be misinterpreted if they weren’t apart of it. He nodded his head. “I think you are. He bought you a ring didn’t he?”

Lily held up her hand for Remus to inspect. He daintily grabbed it and looked at the ring. “He could do much better, the nervous git. You have no idea what it was like being in the room when you weren’t.”

“I like it,” Lily said. “But I’m glad I didn’t experience his nervous stage. He gets a bit moody-”

“Tell me about it.”

Lily grinned brightly. “I know Remus, I know.” Remus let go of her hand and peered at Lily closely.

“So you’re having a girl?” Lily nodded her head. “Have you picked out any names? Merlin, I sound so much like a girl.” Remus put his head down and Lily laughed at him. She patted his arm daintily.

“Don’t worry about it Remus. I’ll keep that information to myself. What the Marauders don’t know won’t hurt them, right?” She grinned and Remus smiled back. “Now back to your questioning. I haven’t really thought of any names, but of course I have some in mind, but I don’t think about them often. James hasn’t even heard them yet.”

“He will eventually. He’s been talking about a few names, but I’ve been sworn into secrecy about them, so don’t ask.” He watched as Lily’s eyes grew wide at the thought of not knowing.

“That’s not fair! I thought we don’t keep secrets.”

“I never said that,” Remus said.

“I assumed you were a nice guy Remus.” Lily stuck her tongue out at him and he did the same back. Then they erupted into stifling giggles. They didn’t stop laughing until a lady came up to their table and asked what they wanted. There specialty was tea, but they also had other things on the menu. Lily asked for tea and Remus asked for a hot chocolate and butter beer.

“How come you’re not drinking tea?” Lily asked, surprised. She had always thought of Remus as being a tea kind of guy.

“Too much caffeine won’t do me any good on the 17th.”

“What’s on the 17th?” Lily asked, taking a sip from her tea.

“The full moon.”

Lily nodded her head, and then she thought about the answer Remus gave her. She began choking on her tea. Remus looked at Lily, his eyes open wide, and pulled out his wand. He quickly pointed it at her throat and dislodged the tea that was there. Lily rested on her elbows and took several deep breaths. Now she had the attention of everyone in the shop.

“Are you okay?” Remus asked.

Lily shook her head. She looked at Remus. “The full moon? You’re a werewolf?” she whispered. Remus nodded his head cautiously.

“Didn’t you know?” he asked, inching away from the table slightly, unsure if Lily was going to throw her tea in his face. Lily shook her head almost violently.

“I had no idea.”

There was an awkward silence for a few minutes. Lily was quickly trying to sort out her information and Remus wanted to run away and hide under a rock. *‘She didn’t know! She’s probably upset that she’s been sharing a room with someone like me! Why didn’t Prongs tell her? I’m going to kill him.’* Remus pushed himself away from the table, about to leave when Lily stopped him.

“What do the other Marauders do when you’re a werewolf, because you’re always together.” She didn’t even give Remus time to answer. “Are they animagi?” Remus nodded his head slowly. “Well that would make sense...but is it legal?” Her jaw dropped when she realized James was breaking a major wizarding law. “Remus, they could go to jail-”

“Lily,” Remus said, sitting back down. “It wasn’t my idea for them to do this, but you can’t tell on them. Yes I know what we’re doing is illegal, but please, don’t tell anyone Lily. I need them just as much as anyone on the full moon and-”

“How can you think such a thing?” Lily whispered harshly. Remus flinched at the sound of her voice. “I wouldn’t tell on them even if my life depended on it. I’m not stupid, I know what happens during a full moon and even though what you’re doing is dangerous, I can see the benefit of having them there.” She swallowed and grabbed Remus’s hands. “I know we haven’t been close in the past seven years, but you’ve been my favorite Marauder, I don’t understand why you wouldn’t tell me.”

“I didn’t want you to change towards me. I liked our friendship.” Remus whispered, staring at their joined hands. “It just seemed like a

secret, well, at the time, that a girl shouldn't know." Lily nodded her head.

"I understand." She pulled her hands away from Remus's and put them in her lap. "How many rumors do you think will be started by the time we get back to Hogwarts?" She looked around, realizing that nearly everyone was looking at her and Remus.

Remus looked around. "I don't know...half a dozen. Do you want to bet?"

Lily shook her head, "I'm no good at those things." She smiled until Remus smiled back. Then Lily leaned forward. "I know Sirius is a dog...does that mean James is a deer?"

"A stag. It's more manly," Remus said.

"And Wormtail? It sounds kind of..."

"Ratish? He's a rat."

Lily bit her lip. "That fits him quite nicely, to be honest. I'm not making fun of him or anything," she added quickly, before bursting into quiet laughter. When she sobered up she asked, "Where has he been recently? I haven't seen him in ages."

"He's been doing a lot of studying I guess...Trying to get ready for the N.E.W.T.'s. He's also been getting private lessons of some sort. I see him all the time."

"We're together all the time, how come I don't see him?" Lily asked. Remus shrugged his shoulders.

"Anyway," Lily said, leaning back. "I guess it's okay if James is breaking the law...it's for a good cause." Lily laughed and stood. "It's 'bout time we get out of here."

"I agree. The hot chocolate is disgusting."

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"I've never pictured myself picking out baby clothes, and enjoying it." James looked at a little green jumper. "They're so small." He held it up for Lily to see. "Look, it's small."

"James, I'm not giving birth to a giant," Lily reminded, smiling to herself. James had lifted up almost every outfit to show her exactly how small they were.

"I just can't remember ever being this small." He set the jumper back on the rack. Then he thought about it and picked it up again, putting it in Lily's basket. "I really like that one."

Lily nodded her head. There was a pink shirt that had magic written on it in white letters. She put that in her basket. "I think that's all we can afford at the moment James. There's two jumpers, three shirts, pajamas, and a blanket. I think we might have to stop or we'll go overboard."

"Okay," James said, slowly moving away from the baby clothes. Lily followed him as he traveled through the store, looking at things. There was a crib that he had in mind, but he wasn't sure if Lily would want to get it. Just as he was about to suggest it, Lily asked him a question. He thought he misheard her and looked at her. "What?"

"I said why didn't you tell me Remus was a werewolf?"

James stood motionless for a moment, unsure if he was supposed to answer that question. It seemed like he didn't have to because Lily walked to him and wrapped her arms around him. "I know what you're doing is for a good cause, but if once a month your putting your life in danger, I ought to know about it."

She squeezed James tightly and then pulled away to look at him. He smiled down at her and kissed her lightly. He was glad that she wasn't pressuring him to give more details, but he thought she already knew what she wanted to know. When they pulled away Lily was grinning broadly. "Let's go pay for our things, yeah?"

"Right."

They went to the checkout counter and Lily paid for their things. James watched the exchange of money, and then he was surprised when Lily opened his hand and put a galleon in it. She closed his hand and then picked up their bags, walking away.

James stood still a moment, staring at the money, and then he grinned and chased after Lily, grabbing her and squeezing her tightly.

Lily sighed as they finally walked out of the store, hand in hand. There were some people who were at the teashop and when they saw Lily and James, some glared at Lily and some gave James sympathetic looks. Lily just laughed and pulled James down the street and back towards Hogwarts.

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Chapter Twenty-Three: Illness, Rumors, and Eye Covering

Lily climbed out of bed, padding through the room quietly. James was still sleeping, but the other Marauders had gotten up a few minutes beforehand. They were milling about the room, attempting to get ready. She laughed to herself and walked into the lavatory, closing the door behind her. She used the loo and changed into her uniform that was on the back of the door. She was down to one maternity shirt that fit her and a couple pairs of trousers. As she put on her uniform she looked at her reflection in the mirror. Sighing she ran a hand down her protruding stomach. *'I'm so large. Can I get bigger?'*

Sighing, Lily left the lavatory. James was just getting up. She sat down on the edge of the bed and pulled on a pair of socks, and then she put on her shoes. When she was finished she looked at James. He was watching her tie her shoes. "Something wrong with my feet?" she asked softly.

James blinked tiredly at her. "They look swollen."

"They feel swollen."

James smiled softly at her and was about to say something when there was a flash and then the lavatory door slammed shut. Everyone looked around the room, and Frank sat up in bed.

Peter walked to the door and listened for a moment. "It sounds like Moony is getting sick."

James cringed and slowly stood up. "Lily, don't wait up for us."

She nodded her head. She finished getting ready for classes by brushing her hair and tying it in a tight bun. She waved goodbye to the Marauders and Frank and then made her way downstairs. Elizabeth and Alice were just leaving the Common Room, and Lily shouted for them and caught up. She walked with them to breakfast.

"Where're the Marauders?" Elizabeth asked, looking over her shoulder.

"Remus is sick so they're staying with him," Lily said, sighing.

“Oh dear. Like a fever sick?”

“He’s throwing up. I’m not sure if he’s running a fever. Maybe I should have checked?” Lily said, thinking aloud.

“They’ll probably take him to Madame Pomfrey. Don’t worry about it. Believe it or not...the Marauders actually know how to care for someone! Look what they’ve done to you.” When Lily laughed, Elizabeth and Alice laughed too. They made it to the Great Hall and sat down towards the front of the table. Lily piled everything on her plate and began eating heartily.

“You need calcium,” Alice concluded, watching as Lily had oatmeal and cheese. She had a plate of eggs, kippers, and scones with marmalade on them beside the bowl.

“What do you mean?” Lily asked, taking a spoonful of the cheesy mess.

“You’re eating a lot of it. There’s cream in your oatmeal, cheese in your oatmeal...milk in your goblet,” Alice said, pointing at all the food around her. “You might as well eat a bone and call it a day.”

Lily scrunched up her face. “That’s gross Alice...I don’t like eating bones.”

“We’re so barmy,” Elizabeth said, laughing. “Talking about calcium and bones...I think we are the ones that need to see Madame Pomfrey...to get our brains checked!” They all burst out laughing, Lily covering her mouth to try and stifle her laughter.

After they calmed down, Alice gave Lily a serious look. “So Lily,” Lily looked up from her breakfast to look at Alice. Alice had one eyebrow arched so high it nearly disappeared into her hair. “I heard that you and Remus were nearly shagging each other in Hogsmeade the other day.”

“Oh, that’s not what I heard,” Elizabeth leaned closer, forgetting about her breakfast. “It is now known that James doesn’t know if he’s the father of the baby and that he and Remus are going to play a game of quidditch and whoever wins gets to take care of you.”

"You bloody scarlet woman," Alice added, trying to push the corners of her lips down. Lily's eyes opened wide and she momentarily forgot about her breakfast.

"What!" she nearly shouted. "We did no such thing. Remus and I-- There's nothing there!"

Alice shrugged her shoulders. "Well, there were a lot of people at that shop you went to. A lot of them think you and Remus have a little thing on the side. Friends with benefits kind of thing, except James doesn't know. "

"Some people blame it on your hormones. You just can't get enough Lily!" Elizabeth smiled a small smile. That was when Lily realized they were taking the mickey out of her.

"Is that what they're really saying?"

"Oh...a lot more Lily, and I'm being serious."

"The rumors that they come up with at this school," Elizabeth said. "Weren't you bulimic earlier this school year?"

Lily sunk in her chair, playing with her cheesy oatmeal. "I wish people would just ask me what's going on."

Alice and Elizabeth threw their arms around Lily. "It's alright Lily. Do you know how fun it is teasing the mickey out of you? Just tough it out and laugh a little." Lily smiled and nodded her head.

"Right." She looked up at Elizabeth and then Alice. "I have no idea what I'd do without you two."

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It was late in the evening when Lily finally returned to the Common Room. She had to oversee the study group that the sixth year prefects started and she had to do her own homework. She looked out the windows and saw the full moon. She cringed, knowing where James and the other Marauders were. She felt bad for Remus

because he had to go through the painful transformations, but she was glad that the Marauders were there making it a bit better.

Lily sat down in an overstuffed armchair and opened her bag. She still had a bit more homework to complete, and then some notes to copy. It seemed like the Marauders had missed the most important day of classes. There had been a huge list of things that Binns went over and was refusing to go over again for a test. McGonagall gave them nearly four pages of notes to copy from the board and they were being tested on it in a few days. Flitwick had done nearly the same thing except he added a review parchment for homework! She remembered that one of her Professors had said this was to ready them for N.E.W.T.'s, but Lily still thought this was a lot of work. Slughorn had given them a writing prompt and demanded that they have a two foot essay on Polyjuice potions the next day!

Lily thought it would be inconsiderate of the Marauders feelings to not help out in some way so she wrote five different essays, the one for Peter being the easiest because he was taking a normal potions class and for Remus she did his Arithmacy and Ancient Runes homework. She had to do her own still, not counting the notes she had to copy for the Marauders as well.

Lily pulled out her quill and began to diligently work on her homework. It was hours later when she finished her homework. She looked at the clock and saw that it was nearing quarter after one. *'Only copying of the notes left.'* Lily sighed. This was a tedious process because after she copied the notes, she had to transform them into the Marauders handwriting. Nearly an hour after she began her process, she was finished. Just as she was standing up to go to bed, she sat back down in her chair in a huff. *'I forgot about the Charms review parchment!'* Slowly she pulled out her Charms book and the review parchment. It was nearly two and a half feet long and it took her an hour and a half to complete.

Finally, when Lily thought she couldn't hold her quill any longer, she closed her book. She put all her work in her bag and made her way to the boys dormitory. Just as she was passing the third years room, there was a loud bang, shaking the door. Lily spun around quickly and walked into the room, ignoring the common courtesy of knocking.

Lily looked around the room, her mouth agape. It seemed like a carton of fireworks had exploded, and there was a bed on fire and all the boys in the room were huddled in a corner. Lily acted quickly and extinguished the fire. Then she looked at the boys. *'Merlin, why tonight?'*

Lily was sure someone was out to get her.

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"Evans, you need to get to bed."

It seemed like there was a pajama party, and Lily wasn't invited. She was standing in McGonagall's office, McGonagall in her nightdress, the boys were in their pajamas, and Dumbledore was in his pajamas. Lily was still in her school things.

"We can handle this from here," Dumbledore added politely. "Why don't you get some rest? You're excused from your early morning classes." He gave a look to McGonagall. The only class Lily had the next morning, or rather, later that day, was double Transfiguration. McGonagall nodded her head.

"I'm fine Professor," Lily said. "I've already missed so many classes in the passed few weeks. I'll be fine."

"Goodnight Ms. Evans," Dumbledore said, opening the door. Lily smiled at him and made her way from the office. She walked quickly to the Gryffindor Common Room, trying to stifle her yawns. She had left her bag in the Common Room and she was in dire need of sleep. When she reached the Common Room she whispered the password to the Fat Lady and the portrait swung open. She walked in and was surprised to see the Marauders making there way up the boys dormitory staircase. Lily looked out the window and was surprised to see the sun rising.

"What're you doing up?" James asked, watching Lily as she slowly moved to her things. "You weren't waiting up for us, were you?"

Lily shook her head and tried to swing her bag onto her shoulder, but Sirius rushed to her and took the bag from her. She smiled at him

gratefully. "I had homework and then the third year boys set off a carton of fireworks." She looked at the Marauders and wrinkled her nose just slightly. They were absolutely filthy.

"We know, we know," James said, noticing her look. "We're going to take showers, don't worry."

"Good," Lily mumbled. She walked passed them and slowly made her way to the 7th year dormitory. She could smell the distinct smell of smoke and burnt wood, so she stopped at the third years room and cleaned it up. The Marauders waited for her at the doorway. It took a few minutes for Lily to get all the charm work done, and then she opened a window and then left. The Marauders followed her silently as she made her way to the 7th years dorm. When she opened the door she heard a distinct sound of glass breaking, and then a light turned on.

Frank sat up slowly in bed. "Be quiet please," he whispered.

Lily looked around the room. It seemed like there had been absolute chaos in there while she had been in classes. There were dishes all over the floor and parchment. There must have been a cup behind the door, because Lily saw shattered glass.

The Marauders exchanged sheepish looks. They knew they were in trouble now.

Lily sighed. She felt too exhausted to scold them. She just stepped around all the junk on the floor and sat on James bed. She kicked off her shoes and began to undress, ignoring the rest of the Marauders.

James, realizing that Lily was probably out of it, cleared his throat and made the Marauders do their own thing and ignore Lily. He stood in front of Lily and lifted her chin. Her shirt was about halfway open. "Lily, you're getting undressed in front of the guys."

Her only response was, "Oh." James was sure she didn't quite comprehend what he said, so he stood in front of her and she undressed, slipping her nightdress on. James took her clothes and folded them neatly, unsure if she were going to do anything to them. Lily just crawled into bed and almost instantly fell asleep. James

covered her up and then grabbed his own pajamas, walking to the bathroom.

James was definitely relieved that the boys dormitory had more than one shower stall.

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Lily's eyes fluttered open when she heard the alarm clock. At first she had to fight to keep her eyes open, and then she managed to sit up. She saw that the room was a mess and the Marauders were gone. *'They must be hiding from me.'* She looked and saw that Frank was gone. She slowly crawled out of bed and grabbed her only maternity shirt, a skirt, knickers, and a bra. She made her way to the bathroom, where she took a quick shower.

Her hair was still soaking wet as she left the Gryffindor Common Room and made her way to the Great Hall, her bag slung over her shoulder. She walked quickly, her stomach was growling quite impatiently. Halfway to the Great Hall she stopped; she had a stitch in her side from walking so fast. After taking several deep breaths she carefully made her way to the Great Hall. When she got there she noticed that Frank and the Marauders were sitting and eating quietly, all looking sullen. Elizabeth and Alice were not at the Gryffindor table. They were eating with the Ravenclaws. *'They must think I'm going to chew them out.'* Lily got a *little* satisfaction from them thinking they were in trouble. She walked to the Gryffindor table and she saw Frank motion to the Marauders, then he moved away.

Lily sat down beside James. "Morning," she said, covering her mouth as she yawned. She hated only getting a few hours of sleep.

"Morning," the Marauders mumbled back.

Lily reached inside her bag and began pulling out parchments. "We have loads of homework last night-" All the Marauders groaned in protest. "So I managed to squeeze in time in my schedule to do it for you." Lily looked at the Marauders as their mouths fell open. Peter even had food in his mouth. Lily rolled her eyes at this and continued to pull out homework. "We had Charms, Transfiguration, Potions,

Remus had Ancient Runes and Arithmacy...and lots and lots of notes." She distributed the parchments to their rightful owners.

"Oh my...Merlin...I think- Lily, I think I might *love* you," Sirius said, looking at all the homework that was in his own handwriting.

"Wow," Remus whispered. "You stayed up all night doing this...for us?" he asked.

Lily nodded her head. "You guys deserved a bit of a break...what with-

"Remus's furry little problem," James said. The Marauders laughed, but Lily shook her head.

"Whatever," she murmured, putting her bag on the floor. She began dishing up her breakfast when James stilled her movements. She looked up at him and he kissed her.

Sirius gasped. "There's children up and about!" He looked around the table and saw two first year boys sitting a bench over. "You! Cover your eyes!"

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Chapter Twenty-Four: Loo and Furry Little Problem Issues

"You've gone to the bathroom two times this morning."

Lily looked at James and rolled her eyes. "If you had a few pounds sitting on your bladder, you'd need to go too." She sat down on the bed and stared at her feet. They were swollen, but Madame Jacobs had given her a mild pain relieving potion, but it seemed to do nothing with the swelling. James looked at her feet too.

"Maybe you should get that checked."

"I have," Lily said, sighing. She wiggled her toes and then she put her feet on the floor. "Will you get my shoes? Socks too."

James nodded his head and bent over and picked up her shoes and socks. Instead of making her bend to put them on, he slid to the floor and put them on for her. When he was finished she smiled at him gratefully. James smiled back. He leaned his head against her knees and hugged her.

"Prongs is breaking one of the ten commandments. You shall not show public displays of affection."

"Shouldn't you be in prison by now?" Lily asked when James pulled away. "Because what you do-"

"No one's in the room except me and another person, that doesn't count," Sirius said, sticking out his tongue at Lily. Before Lily could retort Remus stomped into the room, anger written across his features. He almost tripped over James, but he managed to catch his balance.

"What's wrong Moony?" James asked, getting to his feet.

"I have a detention for having a pet rabbit on Hogwarts grounds." He sat down on his bed angrily. "A first year told on me--I don't even have a rabbit!"

"Was it your furry little problem that got you in trouble?" James asked. It looked like Remus was about to throw a pillow at James, but Lily

intervened, requesting help from someone to pull her off the bed. She had to go to the lavatory. James helped Lily to her feet and she made a mad dash to the bathroom.

After Lily went to the lavatory and came back out, Remus seemed to be cooled off. Lily shivered and put on her school robes. During the last month or so, she had outgrown all her pants and was down to skirts, making her cold and uncomfortable. Quickly tightening her tie she took one look in the mirror and was pleased that she didn't look entirely exploded. She walked out of the boys dormitory, slowly following the Marauders, her mind drifting to the many things that were going on around her. Alice and Frank were happily engaged, which made her think of life outside of Hogwarts. *'What am I going to do with a baby? James is more than likely going to work...But that doesn't quite matter, statistics say that James and I are more than likely not going to be together after the baby.'* Lily stopped walking and snorted. *'Statistics can be wrong.'* She didn't try to catch up with the Marauders. She just took her time, her hand moving to the small of her back. It hurt a lot, but the pain relieving potions merely dulled the pain. Madame Pomfrey didn't want to give her something that might take away her labor pains.

"Labor pains..." Lily mumbled. She smiled a small smile. *'I'm not going to pregnant forever!'* She felt as if her entire pregnancy was never going to end...ever. She knew she had a month or so left and then out comes the baby, and to be honest, she didn't quite mind. Sirius's voice was slowly floating towards her and she looked at him. It seemed like he had been talking to her for several moments.

"Were you listening to me?" Sirius asked. He was standing at the Great Hall doors, holding them open for her.

"No." Lily paused to look at Sirius. Then she smiled and touched his arm before going into the Great Hall. She heard him grumbling about something, but she ignored him. Grinning broadly she sat down next to James at the Gryffindor table.

"What are you grinning about?" James asked, leaning over Lily to grab toast.

“Oh, nothing important,” Lily said, shaking her head. She couldn’t seem to wipe that smile off her face. James shrugged his shoulders and returned to his breakfast. He only looked up again when Sirius sat down across from him, mumbling something about hormones and pregnant women. James was still confused, but he chose to not take part in the conversation. Peter took part in the conversation but that conversation didn’t get very far.

When they finished eating, Lily was the first to stand. Classes started in about fifteen minutes and she wanted to get a head start. She shouldered her bag and waved goodbye to the Marauders before making her way out of the Great Hall. She had double potions and she was almost looking forward to the potions class because usually they had to make potions on double potions days and she was freezing.

She tightened her robe around her middle and shifted her bag. It felt lighter, and she was relieved. Remus had taken her massive Ancient Runes text book and James had her Charms book. Lily walked down the stairs to the dungeons. Her hands were gripping the railing tightly and she took her time. She had always had a fear of falling down those stone steps. She shuddered at the thought.

When her feet were safely on the floor, she breathed a sigh of relief. She knew sometimes she overreacted to some things, but these stairs were not an overreaction. A few minutes had passed and she could hear students behind her coming towards the dungeons. ‘*Good timing.*’ She reached the Potions classroom a minute later, and walked in, claiming her regular table at the front. The Marauders always sat behind her, and Alice and Elizabeth would sit on either side of her. She noticed that Slughorn wasn’t in the room, which was odd, and that there was not a bubbling potion in a cauldron at the front of the room.

Nearly five minutes later students began milling into the room. The Marauders were one of the first, followed by Alice and Elizabeth. None looked pleased, Double Potions was not a fun two hours.

“Stop looking like you’re glad to be here,” Alice said, setting her bag down on the table.

“Oh bollocks Alice,” Elizabeth said. “Lily’s just happy. Her expression doesn’t say, *‘I love Slughorn.’*”

Lily laughed, shaking her head. Alice and Elizabeth sat down and they waited for the classroom to fill up. Slughorn still hadn’t appeared by the time the bell rang. Lily could hear some of the students getting rowdy, and she knew that since she was the Head Girl she should control them, but she didn’t quite feel like raising her voice or wasting energy on discipline. James was definitely not going to do anything at the moment, he was having an in-depth conversation with Remus about his detention. It was to be with Hagrid that evening.

Finally the door opened to the classroom and everything got quiet. In stepped an older man, wild gray hair sticking up in all directions. He wasn’t looking too pleased to be in there, but he was there.

“Silence!” he bellowed to the few students who were still talking. That seemed to quiet everything down. Lily felt goose pimples prickle at her skin. The older man went to the front of the classroom and examined everyone. “I’m Professor McNeil, and I’m substituting for Professor Slughorn. I’ll do role call shortly and then you have the rest of the period to do one of two things. Either you can write an essay on a potion of your choice, or you can do book work, both of which are due for your next potions class. Of course everything shall be done silently, which means no noise, not even a bless you for a person who sneezes. Sirius Black?” he called, looking around the room. Sirius raised his hand high in the air. McNeil acknowledged him and went on with the role call.

Lily pulled out her potions book. She could do book work rather quickly, and decided the essay could wait.

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Barely a quarter of the class passed before Lily finished her book work. She put down her black quill and blew on her parchment, quickening the drying. *‘Why waste charm work when blowing on parchment can make the ink dry faster?’* She blew on it a moment longer before setting it aside. She looked at her hands, there were ink stains on them already. She leaned over, pausing to grip her side. Whenever she stretched a sharp pain would go up her side. For a

moment she took a deep breath, trying not to catch the attention of anyone around her. That didn't seem to work because she heard James hiss at her. She turned her head to look at him. She read the expression on his face and nodded her head slowly. After another moment she was able to move again, and she reached for her bag, pulling it up. She needed her blue ink to write her essay.

She found her ink bottle in the pouch connected to her bag. She got the ink and set it on the table, grabbing another piece of parchment. She had a potion in mind to use for her essay, but she had no idea as to how to write the essay. It was difficult to write an essay when one didn't know what it was supposed to be based on. Lily raised her hand high in the air to get the attention of the Professor.

With a sigh, Professor McNeil got up from his seat and stood in front of her. "What is it Miss Evans?"

"What is this essay supposed to be about?"

"About a potion, albeit I know it's hard to understand what it's about. I mean, you are in Potions class and you study potions and make potions..."

Lily's eyes flickered. She was taken aback by his sarcasm. "I know it's about potions. That's not hard to understand," Lily's voice hardened, but she was speaking quietly, only loud enough for Alice and Elizabeth to hear. They continued to work on their work, but they weren't writing or reading anything. They were listening to Lily. "It's just, what's the point of the essay? Am I supposed to write about what's in the potion, why it's used? What are the details? I'm sure Professor Slughorn left something behind for you to tell us."

"I've already told you about your assignment." Professor McNeil stood up straight. "Why don't you do your work, or would you like to be written up for insubordination?"

"I wasn't being insubordinate!" Lily hissed. "I was asking a simple question."

"Again, would you like to be written up? If not I suggest that you return to your work." Professor McNeil eyed Lily carefully. Lily glared

at him for a moment before returning to her work. She gripped her quill so tightly that it was surely going to break. Alice reached over and loosened the grip on Lily's quill. Lily sighed and looked at her blank parchment. She dipped her quill into her ink and began writing, hoping that her essay would make sense even though she didn't know the intimate details of the topic.

Lily was surprised at how freely she wrote on the potion she chose. She was sure that this essay couldn't get top marks, most of it was information stored away from earlier years at Hogwarts. Polyjuice Potions.

Halfway down her parchment she realized two things. One, she had no idea as to how long her essay was supposed to be. Usually she wrote no more than a sheet of parchment unless it was requested that she write more, and two, she had to use the loo.

The latter obstacle was making it hard to concentrate. She was sure her bladder must have shrunk during the night. Three times in one day, in one morning was more than she had ever gone in her life, other than when she had morning sickness, but that didn't count. She had been sick then.

Lily looked at the clock. There was about thirty six minutes left of class, but she knew she wouldn't be able to wait. Her bladder was at its full capacity. *'I'm going to have to get that checked.'* Lily raised her hand again. *'Second question to a jerk of a Professor. He can't deny me the lavatory.'*

"What is it Evans?" McNeil called from his desk. He didn't even bother to stand up and come to her desk.

'Dropping the Miss already?' "I have to use the lavatory," Lily said, her voice crisp and clear.

"You can go after class," McNeil said, returning to what he had been doing earlier.

"I can't wait," Lily said, tapping her foot and squeezing her knees together. "I have to go now."

“There’s thirty minutes of class left, you can wait.”

“I can’t when my baby is pushing against my bladder!” Lily nearly shouted. She knew now that she was being insubordinate, but this man was being ridiculous.

“What baby?” McNeil asked, leaning on his elbows to look at Lily. “I see no baby-”

“It’s inside of me. Can I use the lavatory?”

“No.” McNeil sat back in his seat. “That excuse isn’t going to work. I’ve been a Professor a lot longer than you’ve been in school. I’ve heard that excuse too many times to believe it.”

“I’m as big as a whale!” Lily said, standing up. “If you can’t tell I’m pregnant, than you’re blind.”

“Where are the Head Students?”

Lily raised her hand, as did James. McNeil ignored Lily. “Will you write her up? I’m quite sure you’re familiar with the process.”

Lily spun around, her eyes flashing at James. “If you write me up James-”

“I’m not.” James stood up. “Sir, you should really allow her to use the lavatory before she gets distressed. Madame Jacobs, her healer, wants to make sure she doesn’t get too upset over anything. She’s getting closer to her due date-”

“I can’t believe this! Is the entire class in on this?” McNeil asked, throwing his hands in the air. Alice scooted closer to her table and Lily walked passed her, going to the door. “If you leave this classroom Evans, disciplinary actions will be taken!” Lily was out of the room before he even finished his sentence.

James quickly began packing his belongings, closing his ink bottle and throwing everything in his bag. He left his wet parchment on the table, asking Remus to take it for him since the ink hadn’t dried.

“Where are you going?” McNeil asked when James walked towards the door.

“As Head Boy, and Lily Evans fiancé, I have the responsibility to make sure she gets to the loo without any problems.”

James left the classroom, slamming the door behind him. He started running in the direction of the only bathroom in the dungeons, knowing Lily was probably only a little ways to it. He couldn't believe that that Professor hadn't allowed her to go to the lavatory.

‘I’m definitely taking this up with McGonagall.’

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Chapter Twenty-Five: Moving, Falling, and Detentions

Lily wrapped her cloak around her tighter. She was on her way to Hagrid's hut where she was supposed to serve her detention. She wasn't actually going to do any strenuous work, but she was going to help pick plants from the edge of the Forbidden Forest with Remus, who had to serve his rabbit detention.

As Lily was nearing the Entrance Hall doors, she was stopped by Remus, who must've been chasing her because he was out of breath. "We're supposed to go to Dumbledore's office," he said, leaning on his knees to catch his breath.

"Why?" Lily asked, confused. "I thought we were supposed to have our detentions with Hagrid?"

"I guess that was too much work for you, what with bending over and getting on your knees. We're probably going to eat lemon drops and grade papers in front of the fire," Remus said jokingly. He stood up straight and looked at Lily. "Come on, let's go."

Lily fell into step beside Remus as they walked to Dumbledore's office. They spoke quietly about what they could do for their detentions, and Remus even suggested that she cry to get the out of it, but he was joking. Dumbledore would surely see through that and make them do something much worse.

As they neared the gargoyle that protected Dumbledore's office, Remus said the password. It jumped to the side and Lily gave Remus a look. "I'm here nearly once or twice a week Lily. I always have the passwords."

Lily laughed and they stood on the staircase as they revolved up. Lily was glad that the spinning wasn't fast, but surely it could have gone a bit slower. When they stopped in front of the door, Lily heaved a sigh of relief. Just as Remus was about to knock on the door, Dumbledore called for him to open it.

Remus opened the door and allowed Lily to step in first. She walked in and Dumbledore indicated for her to sit down in the chair that was

in front of him. Remus shut the door behind him and sat down in the chair next to Lily.

“Miss Evans, if you would please tell me why you have this detention in the first place,” Dumbledore leaned back, fingers steepled, looking at Lily.

“Er...sure, I have a detention because Professor McNeil, the substitute for Professor Slughorn, wouldn't let me use the lavatory. I was refusing to have an accident, so I left the classroom without permission.”

“Did you disrespect your Professor at all?” Dumbledore asked.

Lily shook her head. “If I did, I didn't know it. I was just upset that he didn't let me go, and honestly Professor, I really had to go.”

“I understand...somewhat, slightly. Sometimes I need to use the lavatory too. You're excused from this detention.” He turned to Remus. “Mr. Lupin, there seemed to be a misunderstanding with your detention. Is it true that sometimes the other Marauders say you have a furry little problem, and it has nothing to do with a rabbit?”

Remus nodded his head. “They try to make light of my lycanthropy.”

Dumbledore nodded his head and then he stood up. “Would you two like some tea and biscuits? I'm afraid I've been having a lot of visitors, but no one will try my biscuits. It's my own recipe,” he said, walking towards one of the many tables in his office. Lily watched as he put a pot of tea and three cups on a tray beside a heaping plate of biscuits that looked kind of lumpy. “I must say I am not the best at cooking, but I think these are better than Hagrid's, personally.”

Lily compared these biscuits to Hagrid's, and they looked just as dangerous. But to be polite she took a biscuit as Dumbledore poured her a cup of tea. Hoping that this wasn't going to cause a gag reflex, she took a bite.

At first Lily was shocked that she didn't break her teeth. Then she was surprised that the biscuit tasted good. She turned to Remus and

he looked just as surprised. "These are good Professor," Remus said, popping the rest of the biscuit into his mouth.

"They do look a bit lethal," Dumbledore said, handing Lily a cup of tea. "But they are scrumptious. Better than lemon drops, but don't tell anyone. Those are my secret candy."

"The Muggle kind?" Lily asked.

"The best of the best," Dumbledore said, sitting back down.

Lily grinned and leaned forward, taking another biscuit. She glanced at Remus and he grinned at her. He seemed quite pleased that they didn't have detentions, and she knew she was definitely glad that they didn't. She nibbled on her biscuit as she watched Dumbledore pour another cup of tea. Tonight was going to be a good night.

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Remus pulled open the door, careful to not drop the neatly wrapped napkin of biscuits. Dumbledore had sent them off with the biscuits and a smile. Remus stepped onto the revolving staircase and flattened himself against the wall to allow Lily to walk out. She shut the door behind her and smiled at Remus. She braced herself for the turning and put one hand against the wall for support and one on her back for her own support.

After spinning for a moment, they stepped out of the secret passageway that lead to Dumbledore's office. Lily and Remus walked quietly, a comfortable silence between them. Remus was wary of every move Lily made. She still had one hand resting on her back and occasionally she'd bring her hand up and stroke her stomach. She'd been doing that a lot lately and Remus remembered James saying that they were small labor pains.

"LILLLEEE!"

Lily looked up as Sirius ran towards her. It looked like he had been running straight from the shower because his hair was plastered to his forehead and his shirt had water spots on it. He skidded to a halt

in front of Lily, barely out of breath. "James is in the Hospital Wing." He watched as Lily's eyes widened and she looked scared.

"Why?" she asked, alarmed. She turned slightly in the direction of the Hospital Wing, taking a step back.

"A fifth year fell off his broom during quidditch practice. James walked him down." Sirius slung an arm around Lily's shoulders and steered her in the direction of the Gryffindor Common Room. Lily glared at Sirius for giving her such a fright, but he didn't seem to notice. "What're those?" he asked, pointing at the napkin in Remus' hands.

"Biscuits from Dumbledore. They're Lily's, so don't eat them."

Sirius pouted but didn't pester any more. Lily pushed his arm from around her shoulder and walked between him and Remus. When they were nearing the moving staircases, Sirius grinned. "I'll race you," he said, looking at Remus. Remus grinned.

"You're on," Remus replied. Lily rolled her eyes and carefully made her way up the steps, gripping the railing tightly in her hands as Remus and Sirius sped passed her, taking the stairs two at a time. She had no idea where they were racing to, either the top of the stairs or the Gryffindor Common Room. She paused halfway up the steps, taking a breath. She never got winded on the stairs before she was pregnant. She heard Remus and Sirius coming back down the stairs, probably concerned about why she stopped. She let go of the railing and covered her mouth while moving forward.

Then the one thing she was dreading happened. As she was standing on one foot, her other one in the air to get on the other step, the staircase moved, breaking her balance. She tried reaching out to grab the railing but didn't grab it before she began. For a brief second her eyes locked with Sirius's as he flew down the stairs after her, but before he could reach her, the staircase was already gone from the landing. Then Lily closed her eyes and screamed as she fell down the stairs. She wasn't sure if it was the magic in her body or by sheer luck, but she did not touch the stairs as she fell. She just flew backwards, as if she were free falling.

'Am I free falling? Did I fall over the railing?' Lily couldn't open her eyes. She kept them closed, afraid to see how fast she was going. She knew she had been falling for a few seconds, even though it seemed like an eternity.

And then suddenly she was snatched into someone's arms. She opened her eyes and stared into James's chest. They were still in the air, but it seemed like James had flown into the air and caught her. Both his arms were securely around her waist and he was holding her tightly. *'I want on the ground. I want on the ground.'* Lily thought, repeating her mantra over and over again. Her body was shaking and she was sure her heart was going to burst from her chest.

"Oh Merlin Lily, are you okay? Please tell me your okay," James whispered, slowly floating down to the floor. He was glad he still had his broom, or he would have witnessed the most terrible accident in Hogwarts history. He didn't even want to know how she had fallen, even though he assumed the staircases moved. But how'd she fall over the railing? Lily hadn't replied to any of James's questions. "Lily. Lily, can you hear me?"

Lily mumbled something and leaned closer to James. He breathed a sigh of relief and then they landed on the ground. He allowed his broom to fall beneath him once he was safely on his feet. Lily tried standing on her feet, but she had been shaken up so bad that she couldn't support her weight. James hoisted her into his arms, not struggling a bit. He looked up when he saw Sirius and Remus running down the staircase. It had moved back into place. "James! Is she okay?!?" Sirius shouted, Remus right behind him.

"I think so," James said, looking at Lily. "I think she's just a bit shaken up." He smoothed back her hair and checked her face and head for any injuries. She mumbled into his shoulder that she didn't hurt herself as she fell. "Do you need to see Madame Pomfrey?" he whispered, tilting her chin up so he could see her and hear her.

"No," Lily closed her eyes and leaned her head against his shoulder. They were still just standing, but Lily was beginning to regain her breathing. She was about to suggest that he let her down to walk,

when he moved forward, shifting her in his arms so he could properly carry her. "James, you don't need to carry me," she whispered.

"You can't even walk on your own Love," he said, taking the stairs slowly. Sirius and Remus walked behind him, Sirius carrying James's broom. The two teenagers felt guilty. If they hadn't run off to race each other, they could have kept Lily safe between them. Remus rubbed his eyes tiredly. He had never been so scared in his life, watching Lily fall. He didn't even see James coming, so he was sure she was going to hit the stone cold floor and probably hurt herself and more than likely lose the baby.

They walked silently to the Gryffindor Common Room. Sirius mumbled the password and the Fat Lady swung open the portrait. They climbed through the portrait hole and it seemed like there was a half decent party going on in the Common Room. It was definitely a school night. James exchanged glances with Remus and Sirius and they knew what to do.

"Let's get this wrapped up. No parties on school nights," Sirius rushed over, immediately noticing three third years handling Fire Whisky. "Aren't you the ones who caught your dorm on fire?"

Remus began cleaning up the mess. James continued walking on, going up the stairs to his dormitory. When he entered he heard snoring and it was Peter. Frank wasn't in there. James slowly walked over to his bed and laid Lily down. For a moment she was reluctant to let go of his neck, but she did anyway. "Do you hurt anywhere?" James asked quietly, slowly scooting to the foot of the bed. He began untying her shoes.

"No," Lily whispered. "I was just...I was really scared James."

"I know," he whispered. "I'm so glad I had my broom." He looked at her. She was resting on her elbows, looking at him. "How'd you fall over the railing?"

"So I did?" Lily asked. "I did fall over the railing?" she asked, when James gave her a confused look. James nodded his head. "I was walking behind Remus and Sirius, and I guess the staircase moved and I didn't have my balance. All I knew was that I was falling." She

sucked in a breath when she felt a lump forming in her throat. James slowly continued to take off Lily's shoes. He tossed them to the floor without a care and slowly began to take off her socks. Then he looked around a moment.

"Where are your pyjamas?"

"My nightdress is in the bathroom," Lily said, slowly sitting up. She winced and quickly hid the look of pain from James. He stood and walked to the bathroom, returning a moment later. It was relatively dark in the room, and Lily was surprised that James could move without tripping over anything. Lily took off her cloak and pulled her shirt over her head. James helped her put the nightdress on. When she had it on Lily stood unsteadily on her feet to remove her trousers. When they pooled at her ankles she stepped out of them and sat back down on the bed. James quickly undressed and put on his pyjamas before climbing into bed and pulling Lily beside him.

"You're okay?" James asked. He could still feel a slight tremble in her body.

Lily closed her eyes and nestled her head in the crook of his neck. "I'm fine." She felt James reach out and stroke her stomach. She smiled and sighed quietly. Sometimes she wondered why she didn't fall in love with him sooner.

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Chapter Twenty-Six: Emergency Drill

Lily shifted, groaning quietly. *'36 weeks. I'm 36 weeks...and I can't get comfortable now.'* She tried not to make a lot of noise, James was sleeping beside her. She had been laying in bed for probably hours, trying to get comfortable. She went from one side to another, tried sleeping on her back, sat up for a bit, and nothing worked. She punched her pillow and attempted to fluff it. Being pregnant now was too hard.

"Lily?"

"I can't get comfortable," Lily said, looking at James. He yawned and opened his eyes tiredly.

"Can I do anything for you?" he asked, rubbing his eyes.

"I doubt it," Lily said. "My back is killing me and my legs hurt." She dropped her head. "I'm just never going to sleep again."

"Roll over," James said, resting on his elbows. Lily sighed and did as she was told. If James could magically take everything away so she would be able to sleep for a few hours, she'd call him Merlin and give him all the money in the world. "I remember Madame Jacobs said putting a pillow between your knees would help," he reached for his pillow and groped around for a moment until he found his wand. He firmied it up a bit and then handed it to Lily. She put it between her knees and then James lifted up her t-shirt. She was sleeping in shorts and his t-shirt. He began rubbing her back, careful to not press too hard. He knew her due date was getting closer because she complained a lot of her back and stomach hurting.

"Oh," Lily whispered, stretching slightly. She now had to call James Merlin and give him all the money she owned. She dropped her head and covered her mouth when she yawned.

"Does that feel better?"

"Loads." Lily yawned again and felt herself drifting off. If she could fall asleep for just several minutes she would be satisfied. James grinned when Lily fell asleep. He continued his ministrations for several more

moments before pulling her shirt back down. He laid his head right behind hers, sharing a pillow. Lily didn't wake up and James yawned, drifting back off to sleep.

They didn't wake again until the alarm clock went off. Lily's eyes snapped open, but she still felt tired. James stretched slowly and rolled onto his back. Lily rolled to her side and rested her head on his chest. "I think I should start maternity leave," she whispered. "I don't want to get out of bed."

"Lily," James said, trying to contain his grin. "You have the rest of this week, which means Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Astronomy on Saturday, and then maternity leave starts."

"I can start early if I want," Lily said. Never before had she denied school or going to classes, but right now that was the last thing on her mind. James kissed her forehead.

"Love, if you want to start early, start early, but I can't start until next week." He ran his hand through her tangled hair. "Besides, if you go to school for the rest of this week, you're qualified to take your N.E.W.T.'s."

"I don't care about those tests!" Lily said, sitting up. "I just want this thumping little girl out of me! All she does is move, and I think she's trying to puncture my organs with her little toes." She rubbed her stomach. "Try carrying a kicking machine James, I dare you."

James reached for Lily. Her moods sometimes changed faster than time. "Lily, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you."

"You never do," Lily said, falling against him. She sighed and stared at the hangings of his four poster. James stroked her stomach, trying to soothe her. He could tell her nerves were high. Lily stopped his hand and pressed his fingers in one spot. "Feel that?" she asked quietly. He nodded his head slowly. "Remember when you first felt her? At my parents house?"

"She's grown more insistent."

"She has feet now. With little toes and she has little hands," Lily giggled when James said,

"I hope so." James kissed her temple. Maybe today they weren't going to go to classes. He felt the baby kick again and he pulled away. "Is she playing that game? The one where you kick the black and white ball around?" He had the name right on the tip of his tongue.

"I hope not," Lily said, laughing. She turned in James's arms and looked at him. "Let's go to classes, get this week over with."

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"ACK! SHE'S IN LABOR! SOMEONE FIND JAMES! BABY ON THE WAY! THE BUN IS *DONE* IN THE OVEN!" Sirius screamed, running from his bed to the door. He threw it open and nearly flew down the stairs, screaming his lungs out. After several seconds he walked back into the room, grinning to himself. He looked pleased. "That's what I would do if I found Lily in labor."

James was trying to resist the urge to laugh. Lily was reduced to tears and she was laughing, holding her sides. Frank and Peter insisted that they hold emergency drills so it wouldn't be chaos when Lily went into labor. Remus shook his head at Sirius as he marched to his bed and sat down. Everyone had shown examples of what to do if Lily were found in labor. Lily didn't act out any parts, but Sirius was the most impressive with his examples.

"Oh wait! Prongs, how are you going to react when Lily goes into labor?" Sirius asked, standing up. "It'll probably be something like this," Sirius cleared his throat. "*Lily's in labor? OH MY GOODNESS!*" He collapsed to the floor, hand shielding his eyes. Lily wiped away the tears that were in her eyes and sent a side long glance at James. He was laughing but shaking his head.

"I wouldn't do that," James said, taking a deep breath. "I'd probably let out a wail that would rival a banshee, and then I'd fall." Sirius stood again and walked towards Remus. Remus looked at him, eyebrow arched.

“With me screaming my head off, running through the castle, and Frank and Peter probably going to see Madame Pomfrey, Moony will be the only one to tend to Lily’s needs.” Sirius elbowed Remus. “You’ll be the first one to find out if the baby is Prongs’ or if you and Lily’s little affair created that bundle of joy! Yeah?” He elbowed Remus again as Lily and James laughed.

“Shut up! I thought those rumors died,” Remus covered his head, trying not to laugh. Sirius had been teasing the mickey out of him with those rumors.

“Who’s taking care of Lily again?” James asked, looking at Lily then Remus. “I can’t remember the score of our quidditch match. Who won?”

“How can *you* take the mickey out of me?” Remus asked. “She’s your girlfriend.”

“I kind of want to know too,” Lily said. “Will the baby have sandy blonde hair or untamable black hair?”

“You never know,” Remus said, looking at Lily. “It could have red hair.”

“You were with a Weasley?” James asked, shocked. “I thought they were my friends!” He put a hand over his chest and sighed dramatically, causing everyone in the room to laugh. Lily shook her head and leaned it against James’s shoulder. He wrapped his arm around her waist and pulled her closer.

“You know, I still have no idea as to what to do when she goes into labor,” Frank said, scooting to the edge of his bed. “With Sirius screaming, James unconscious, Peter seeing Madame Pomfrey, and Remus taking a peek to see if it’s his baby, what is there left for me to do? Dance?”

“Can you dance?” Sirius asked.

“A little,” Frank replied. “Mostly with Alice though.”

“By the way,” Sirius said, looking at Frank. “When’s your wedding?”

Frank rolled his eyes. "Tomorrow, at noon in Spain. I hope you can make it."

"Really?" Peter asked, confused. "I thought you were getting married in July."

"Double weddings!" Sirius said, clapping his hands excitedly. "I've been talking to James about the wedding and I want it to be in July too!"

"James...you're a poof?" Lily asked, eyebrow arched.

"Alas, I can't deny it anymore," James said, eyes downcast. "I've been attracted to Sirius for all of ten seconds."

"That is not a long enough relationship to be getting into! You need to *know* the person you're marrying," Lily said, shaking her head. A moment later everyone in the room was laughing, unable to contain it anymore. It seemed like someone had put a spell on them because this conversation was just too unbelievable.

"So, the emergency drill is over now," Frank said. "How 'bout a game of quidditch?"

Everyone in the room wanted to play the game. James looked at Lily and saw her nodding off a bit. "Yeah we can play, just give me a minute," James said. He looked at Sirius. "Get the keys for the shed. They're in my quidditch robe pocket. I'll be down in a minute." The guys left single file from the room, Sirius twirling a set of keys around his finger. James looked at Lily and lifted her chin. "Tired?"

"Exhausted. Any type of physical activity makes me that way."

"Laughing is a physical activity?" James asked, standing up from the bed. Lily slowly crawled to the head of the bed and laid down. She took off her robes and used them as a blanket.

"It is now," Lily said, yawning. She smiled at James and then closed her eyes. "I'll see you in a bit. Don't stay out too late," she added, hearing him going towards the door.

"I won't. Love you," James said, slowly closing the door behind him. Lily mumbled something in her sleep and then rolled over, falling into a deeper slumber.

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Lily sat up quickly, ignoring the stitch in her side. It was dark in the room, no noise whatsoever. She quickly patted down her body, making sure all her body parts were there. Sweat covered her brow and she was sure she'd never catch her breath. She felt as if she had just finished running a mile.

She leaned her head against the headboard and took a deep breath, holding it in and exhaling slowly after a second. *'That was a terrible dream.'* She scrubbed at her eyes. *'More like a nightmare...'* She couldn't get the vivid images of her best friends, Alice and Elizabeth, out of her mind. Lily swallowed hard and crawled out of bed. Her robe was laying on the floor, and Lily picked it up. The room was remarkably clean, the Marauders believing that a dirty room was a safety hazard for Lily.

Lily pulled her wand from her robe pocket and whispered, "Lumos." She tiptoed to the window ledge where a pitcher of water was. She used the only glass that was there, and after examining it to make sure it was clean, she poured the cold water into it. She drank it slowly, allowing her mind to drift away from her nightmare. She tried to stop the urge to run from the room to make sure that her best mates were okay, but she knew they were.

Finally, after taking another deep breath and finishing her glass of water, she traveled back to her bed. No one was in the room, but it was dark outside. She looked at the clock and saw that it was only nine o'clock. She sat down gingerly on the bed and took another breath. She sat for several minutes, breathing and looking around the room. No one was in there with her, and she hoped that the Marauders weren't outside still, playing quidditch.

As if they heard her thoughts, the door to the dormitory flew open. James backed into the room slowly, and it seemed like he was carrying a large box. Sirius followed next, carrying the other side, and Remus and Peter brought up the rear carrying bags.

"What's going on?" Lily asked, eyes darting from James to the parcels he was carrying. She could see just the shadow of his grin before the lights turned on in the room.

"We just did a bit of shopping," James said, sitting down on the edge of his bed. "I was wondering, after you have the baby, where is it going to sleep?"

"That was a bit of Padfoot's idea too!" Sirius said. "Because I said it can't sle-"

"She," Lily corrected.

"She can't sleep in your bed because James would roll over her," Sirius said. "But it was James who bought it."

"Bought what?" Lily asked, still confused.

"A cot-"

"You bought her a cot!" Lily exclaimed, jumping in the air. She stepped closer to the big box they brought in and examined it. She could feel tears stinging at her eyes.

"And some clothes," Remus added.

Lily tried not to cry. She ran her fingers down the side of the box and then she returned to the bed. She sat down gingerly and Remus and Peter handed her the bags. She just carefully set the bags on the floor. James maneuvered the box so it leaned against the wall, and then he sat down next to Lily on the bed. She was overcome with her emotions, the pure joy from James, and her horror from her nightmare.

"Right! I don't want to be here any longer, I'm going to party!"

Sirius grabbed Peter and dragged him out of the room. Remus followed suit and shut the door behind him. James turned to Lily and grabbed her hands. "Is something wrong?"

"No-Yes-I don't know," Lily whispered in one shaky breath.

“What’s up?” James asked, stroking the tops of her hands. He watched as Lily took a shuddering breath. “Are you angry at me and the other Marauders?”

“N-no.” Lily shook her head for emphasis. “I’m glad that you guys bought her a cot and things, really.” She sniffled. “It’s just...before you guys got here, I had a nightmare and then you guys came in with all these things...” She pulled her hands out of James’s grasp to wipe at her eyes. James moved a little closer to her.

“Do you want to talk about your dream?” James asked.

Lily shrugged her shoulders. She looked at James and sent him a very watery smile. James moved a bit closer again and wrapped his arms around her shoulders. “I was with Alice and Elizabeth,” Lily whispered. “And we were just walking when we went under attack. I don’t know who it was or anything, but...they killed Alice and Elizabeth, and they were still attacking me...” She closed her eyes. She believed that summarizing her dream made it better.

“What about your other dreams?” James asked.

“Other dreams?”

“Lily love, you haven’t been sleeping well since you fell. Are you okay? Maybe you need to see Madame Pomfrey again.”

Lily shook her head. “I’m fine, don’t worry about me. The dreams...they’ll go away eventually.” Lily hastily wiped at her eyes. Then she took a deep breath and exhaled slowly. “Are you planning on partying with the other guys?” She could see his torn look on his face. For a while now he hadn’t been with his best friends, and she knew he wanted to be with them. “Because, personally, I believe the Head Boy needs to be there or else it’ll get out of hand.”

James smiled at her. “Are you sure?”

“No drinking! A drunk James Potter is a dead James Potter,” Lily said, squeezing him tightly. It felt nice to allow James to do his own thing.

“I wasn’t planning on it,” James murmured, kissing the top of her head. He kissed her eyelids and then a very chaste kiss on the lips. Lily pulled away first and wiped at her eyes. She rested her hands on her stomach and watched as James got up from the bed. He grinned at her before going to the door. He turned off the lights at Lily’s request, and then he shut the door.

Lily winced just slightly as she climbed back into bed, pulling her blankets over her head. For a few days now her stomach had been hurting. *‘Oh well. It’s just getting closer and closer to the day!’*

xoXoXoXox

Chapter Twenty-Seven: Under the Weather

"James," Lily whispered, shaking his shoulder. It was four thirty in the afternoon and both Lily and James had been sleeping until Lily woke up. "James, it hurts."

James's eyes snapped open. "What hurts?" He sat up quickly, looking at Lily. She was perched on the edge of his bed, holding her stomach. "Are you in labor?" he asked, his voice hitching. Lily shook her head.

"I don't think so, but it hurts." She rubbed her stomach and closed her eyes, wishing that the pain would just go away.

"Alright." James slowly maneuvered himself out of bed. "Your healers appointment is in a few minutes anyway." He checked his watch to make sure he was right. "Let's get you down to the Infirmary." He gently pulled her to her feet. She took a few steps before grabbing her stomach again. She let out a little groan. "Lily?" James's hands began shaking.

"I think I'm having contractions," Lily whispered. She opened her eyes and slowly stood up straight. "Let's walk." James looped his arms around her and helped her slowly walk.

"Are you bleeding or has your water broke?" James asked. Realizing that Lily was as dry as dry could be, he figured her water didn't break.

"No." Lily took a deep breath. They hadn't even left his bedroom yet. James slowly opened the door and looked down the stairs. He paused a moment and readjusted Lily. "I can make it," she whispered. "Let's just take our time, yeah?"

"Right."

Step by step, James was sure he had never been so nervous in his life. He kept his arm around Lily and his fingers in one of her belt loops. He was afraid of her having another contraction on their way down the steps and losing her balance. Finally, they reached the bottom of the staircase without trouble. They paused for Lily to catch her breath, and then they moved on. The rest of the Marauders and

Frank were in the Common Room, along with a few other students. At the sight of Lily and James coming down the steps, it got deathly quiet.

“Contractions,” James said, upon seeing everyone look at him. Sirius jumped into the air. “We’re taking our time. No rush. We’re going to walk *slowly*.”

“Walk?”

“It helps,” Lily said, as they inched their way through the Common Room. “My bag is underneath James’s bed. It’s packed, can you bring that along?” Lily asked as she walked passed them. “Anyone would do,” she added as they neared the portrait. They walked through the portrait with only a little bit of difficulty, and then they continued on. “Talk to me,” Lily asked, looking up at James.

“Were you feeling under the weather before?”

“A little.” Lily closed her eyes. “Have you studied enough for N.E.W.T.’s?”

James tried not to laugh. How she managed to keep her mind on other things was beyond him. He couldn’t even fathom thinking of anything but her. “I think I studied enough.”

“I’ll probably take mine during the summer,” Lily said. She struggled to keep up with James’s pace. It seemed like he was a bit ahead of himself and couldn’t wait to get to the Infirmary. “Slow down James. I can barely keep up.” James slowed almost immediately. He wrapped his arm tighter around her and tried to stop the shaking of his hands. “Are you scared?” Lily asked, looking at his hand that was on her side. She stared at it a moment before looking back at James.

“Terrified.”

“So am I.”

“I never thought it would happen so soon.”

“I certainly felt pregnant forever,” Lily said, laughing slightly. They were at the moving staircases now. “Let’s hope these don’t move.”

It was a tedious process to move down the steps. They decided to move twice, altering their course to the Infirmary. Lily held onto James tightly each time the stairs even wobbled. She had been terrified of falling again.

Absolutely terrified.

“We’re almost at the bottom,” James said. “I wonder if whoever is getting your bag is taking his time.”

“It was probably Sirius, and he jumped out a window.” Lily said through gritted teeth. “Thought it would be faster.”

“At any rate,” James said, stepping off the last stair. Lily took a moment before stepping off the stair. “We’ll get to the Infirmary in time for your appointment.”

“It takes too long to get there,” Lily said. She tightened her grip around James and then held her stomach. Nothing she did seemed to take away the pain. James noticed this and he tightened his grip around her, stroking her side. She dropped her head to his shoulder and they continued their way to the Infirmary, at a snails pace.

By the time they reached the Infirmary, Madame Jacobs and Pomfrey were standing outside the door. James saw Sirius standing in the Infirmary, pacing. Lily looked up at James as they neared the two older women. “He really did jump out a window.”

James smiled slightly. Madame Pomfrey directed James to an already made bed. Lily stood beside it for a moment, trying to contemplate exactly how to get on it. These beds were a bit taller than the beds in the dormitories. James noticed her predicament and carefully picked her up, careful to support her knees and back. He set her down gently.

xoXoXoXox

“Why’s it taking so long?”

Remus appeared outside the door to the Infirmary. James and Sirius were pacing, hands clasped behind their backs. James was sweating and every few seconds he would stop and look at the door before continuing on. It had been fifteen minutes since Lily went behind her little enclosed area to change into a hospital gown, and Madame Pomfrey had sent James out.

Remus watched for several moments, debating if he should laugh, or if he should join them. The tension in that corridor was high and thick.

James suddenly stopped, stomping his foot. "I'm of age! I should be allowed in there!"

"You're also the father of the baby," Sirius added.

"Supposedly," Remus muttered. Sirius and James began to chuckle softly, the tension breaking a little.

A few more minutes passed by, and then James collapsed to the ground. He dropped his head into his hands and gripped his hair tightly. The fact that he had no idea what was going on with his girlfriend--fiancé, was driving him mad. 37 weeks seemed a bit too early to him, but then again, he never imagined *it would happen*.

James jumped when the door to the Infirmary opened. Standing at the door in her pyjamas was Lily, her face red and her eyes sparkling. She looked a little relieved. "False alarm," she said, stepping out into the corridor.

"That was a false alarm?" James asked, holding his hand out for Remus to pull him up. Lily nodded her head and when James was safely on his feet, he hugged Lily, not tightly. "What'd they say?"

"I'm going to have the baby in less than a week," Lily said, grinning. "Madame Jacobs told me no more walking, only if I need it, like going to the lavatory, and as much sleep as I can get. I'll need it for the delivery. I'll need to find comfortable positions to sleep in." James wrapped his arm around Lily and Sirius took the bag. They walked slowly back to the Gryffindor Common Room. "I'll be feeling contractions, not as strong as today, but they'll be a bit uncomfortable." James nodded his head. Remus fell into step beside

Sirius. "I might have problems sleeping because the contractions, and this baby feels as heavy as ever," Lily said.

"Well you're going directly to bed," James said. "I can't have you walking about either." And in one fluid movement, he lifted Lily into his arms. Lily squealed in surprise, and laughed when he looked down at her.

"Remus! Why didn't you save me! This baby might be yours too!"

xoXoXoXox

"Lily, I have to see Professor McGonagall about Saturday's quidditch match."

Lily looked up from the book she was reading. James was sitting on the floor, putting together the crib. He felt that it would be a good idea to have it together and set up for their little girl. Lily nodded her head slightly. "I think I'm going to bed anyway," she said. She set aside her book and watched as James stood up. The crib was a little more than half put together, and he knew it wouldn't take long to finish it. He set it on the other side of the bed, not wanting to block Lily's way from getting up and about.

"I'll be back in a bit," James said, kissing her quickly. Lily sat up on one elbow as he neared the door.

"Bring back green beans!"

James laughed said, "I thought you were going to bed?" Lily just shrugged her shoulders. James laughed and nodded his head before leaving.

Lily sighed and laid back down. It was only nine o'clock and she was exhausted. She grabbed her blanket and pulled it up to her chin. She shifted around a bit, trying to find a way to get comfortable. After thinking a moment, she grabbed an extra pillow and put it underneath her hip, taking the pressure off. Sighing in content, she drifted off to sleep.

Dancing.

That's what I'm doing. It's raining and the water is dripping on my face, but I don't care much. I can't believe Petunia won't come out and play with me. She said it was dangerous, that I could slip in the mud, but I won't hurt myself.

I'm magic.

Thunder clapped and I look at the sky. I counted, waiting for the strike of lightning. We haven't had rain in England for ages. The lightning never came. I looked at Petunia, and she looks at me as if I have a death wish.

What's going on?

Suddenly the rain begins pouring harder. I wince, looking at my arms. I gasp as welts appear on my skin. The rain is leaving welts! I run towards the house, heart beating quickly. I didn't travel that far from the house, did I? It was as if my house drifted farther and farther away as I got closer. I couldn't get onto the porch. Petunia is looking at me, smirking. Why is she laughing at me? I shout at her to help me, to run into the rain and help me get to the house, but she starts shaking her head. She's backing away from me, into the house.

I start screaming for my sister. Why isn't she helping me? I need her help! My pulse quickens as I start running faster, watching my house get farther and farther away. I'm losing my breath, I've been running for ages, and my house isn't getting closer.

I feel sick.

My clothes are soaked through and my skin is turning blue. I'm cold. My arms ache from the welts. The rain was pelting my body, taunting me. Why didn't I just listen to Petunia?

Lightning strikes. The hair on the back of my neck stands on end and I turn around. I scream in surprise, the lightning is coming towards me! It hit the ground, and is coming towards me. I stumbled backwards, and before I know it, I'm falling.

Falling.

Darkness.

I can't see anything. I'm just falling in darkness. I feel cold air going passed me. My skin is freezing, my clothes are dry. I was just in the rain. Where am I falling?

I start to scream. Will someone save me? I feel as if I've been here before, and then I start to relax. James will come and save me, on his broom.

I'm still falling.

I managed to look beneath me, and the ground is coming up, fast. Suddenly I realize, no one's going to save me. I start to struggle, reaching in the air for something to hold on to. I'm crying now, unable to hold in my sobs.

I'm falling faster.

Damn gravity.

I see my life flash before my eyes for a brief moment, before I hit the ground, and then--

Lily woke up, gasping for breath. Sweat drenched her skin and she was breathing heavily. Shakily she looked at her arms, relieved that there was no marks on them. As her eyes became adjusted to the light, or lack of, she saw her hands.

"Oh. My. God."

She couldn't breathe for a moment. *'Not good. Not good. Where's James?'* She pulled her blankets away from her body and gasped. Blood soaked through her clothes and sheets. For a moment she felt sick and then dizzy. She didn't know what to do.

xoXoXoXox

Chapter Twenty-Eight: Soundless

"Get the Marauders map," Remus said, looking over his homework at Sirius. Sirius was concerned because James hadn't come back from his meeting with McGonagall. He had called a Marauders meeting, and he knew he couldn't perform the meeting with a fourth of his audience missing.

"You're a genius! Why didn't I think of that?" Sirius asked. He launched from his chair and went up the boys dormitory staircase. He was humming to himself and stopped short, remembering that Lily was sleeping.

Lily tried sitting up but then she felt pain. Laying back down, she tried to ignore the fact that she was alone. *'I'm a witch. I can think and move on my own. I can't move on my own, but I surely can think!'* She looked at the alarm clock and saw that three minutes had passed since she woke up. She knew she could die, alone, if she couldn't get up or get someone's attention. She was quite sure that no one was in the room with her.

After another failed attempt at sitting up, she was sure that she wouldn't be able to get out of the bed. She leaned against her pillows and took a deep breath. She had no idea why she wasn't screaming and shouting, someone would be bound to hear, but she felt too calm. *'Calm! I'm going insane in my head.'*

Another minute passed.

Then she heard the door open. Her eyes opened wide and she looked out, very thankful that her hangings were open. She saw Sirius walk in and towards his bed. *'Better than Peter I suppose.'* She took a deep breath and said clearly, "Sirius."

"Huh?"

"Sirius, don't panic."

"Why would I panic?" He was looking for the Marauder map, and didn't look at Lily.

"Sirius don't panic," Lily said again. "Something happened, I don't know how, but I'm bleeding." Sirius looked up from his trunk, eyes open wide. "I need you to calmly yell for someone downstairs to get Madame Pomfrey, and if possible, Madame Jacobs. Then, if you could please ask someone else to find James, I'd appreciate it. Just don't leave me alone."

Sirius stood up quickly and looked at Lily. She was pale and not looking good. Lily could tell he was going to panic. "Sirius, remember, don't panic."

"I'm not going to panic," Sirius said, his voice shaking.

"You're panicking." Lily watched as he made a mad dash to the door. She swallowed and closed her eyes. *'As long as he gets the job done.'*

"SOMEONE FIND JAMES POTTER! AND SOMEONE ELSE GET MADAME POMFREY! TELL THEM THAT LILY HAS--" he looked at Lily. "You went into labor?"

"Of the sorts."

"TELL THEM THAT LILY HAS WENT INTO LABOR...OF THE SORTS!" He turned back to Lily, and she sent him a small smile. He walked back to her bed, and looked at her. "Do you need anything? Water? Food? Compliments?" His hands were shaking and he was beginning to sweat. By what he saw, he could tell something had seriously gone wrong.

xoXoXoXox

James was walking at a leisurely pace through the corridor carrying a bowl of green beans. He knew he'd never understand why she liked to eat such random things at random times of the day, but he was fine with that.

Just as he was nearing the secret passageway that would take him from where he was, outside of the kitchens to the Gryffindor Common Room, someone burst out of it.

“James!”

“Moony?” James asked, stopping. He was out of breath, gripping the Marauders map tightly in one hand and a two way mirror in his other.

Remus took a second to catch his breath, and then he shoved the map into his pocket. “Something happened, Lily’s bleeding pretty heavily. She needs you.”

James dropped his bowl of green beans, ignoring the shattering of the porcelain. He couldn’t move for a moment, and then Remus tugged on his arm, pulling him forward. That’s all it took for him to break from his reverie, and then he was running, faster than Remus. He couldn’t remember ever running so fast. There were cobwebs and James pushed them out of his face. He burst through the other end of the passageway and was face to face with the Fat Lady. He shouted the password and she swung open. He scrambled through the portrait hole and into the Common Room. It was deathly silent in there and the people who were sitting in there were doing nothing. James ignored them and ran towards the stairs. He nearly tripped up them, but managed to keep his balance. Just as he was nearing the top, Sirius came out of the room, looking pale and sick. “Get in there,” he demanded, walking down the steps. The way he said it made a shiver go up James’s spin.

It didn’t sound good.

He ran into the room and skidded to a halt. Madame Jacobs was in there, and it looked like Sirius had cleared one wall. Madame Jacobs pointed her wand at Lily and then at the wall. She was doing an ultrasound.

James rushed to Lily’s side, and gasped when he saw her. She was deathly pale and her face was screwed up in pain. He dropped to his knees and looked at her. Lily looked at him and attempted to smile, but grimaced instead.

“Why didn’t I catch this earlier? We’re going to have to deliver the baby now,” Madame Jacobs turned from the wall and looked at Lily.

"I'm not having contractions," Lily said, her voice shaking. She realized something was wrong, and it scared her. She wasn't feeling as calm as she was earlier. She wanted to grab James's hand, to squeeze it for comfort, but her hands had blood on them. She felt James's hand on her forehead, he was stroking her skin and pushing her hair out of her face.

"I know, but there's a problem sweetheart," Madame Jacobs looked nervous. "The umbilical cord is wrapped around her neck, and she's not getting any oxygen."

James swallowed and looked at the older Healer. "But she's alive? Why is Lily bleeding? Isn't that a sign of miscarriage?" Saying that out loud made James frown and Lily gasp.

"That's why we need to get this baby now."

"Where?"

"Here. Right now. We can't transport Lily anywhere and she's at high risk right now."

James looked at Lily. Tears were pouring out of her eyes and he could see she was trying to suck them back in. He leaned in and kissed her on her forehead. "It's okay Lily," he whispered. He smoothed her hair back and wiped away her tears. Lily sniffled and held James's gaze. "Everything's going to be okay."

"James, you're going to have to step out."

James tore his gaze away from Lily's. "I can't. I really can't. I have to be here for her." He looked back at Lily and she looked relieved that he wasn't going to go. Madame Jacobs watched them for a moment, and then she sighed.

"Stay, but this isn't going to be an easy process."

xoXoXoXox

Sirius, Remus, Peter, Frank, Alice, and Elizabeth were sitting at the bottom of the stairs, waiting for the cries of a newborn baby, but none

came. They heard screaming, the room hadn't been charmed silent, but that was just about the only sound there was. The younger boys of Gryffindor tower stayed back from the stairs, nearly all of them sitting by the couch. The only person who had gone upstairs was Madame Pomfrey, and she had two bags and blankets.

Several minutes had passed and then Madame Jacobs came downstairs, a pink bundle in her arms. She walked towards the fireplace, when she first arrived she asked that the fireplace be kept lit so she could floo out. She grabbed floo powder and put it in the fire. She stepped into the green flames and spun away.

"Did you hear anything?" Alice asked, her eyes watering. She swallowed a lump in her throat when she saw Frank shake his head.

xoXoXoXox

Chapter Twenty-Nine: Emotions

“Are you feeling okay?”

“Exhausted.”

James was sitting in a chair beside Lily's bed at St. Mungo's. They had been there for four days now, Lily still needing treatment and the baby in intensive care. They had been told that there was a very slim chance that she'd make it, and that drained Lily. She hadn't seen her baby, held her baby, or heard her. Lily rested her head against James's shoulder. “Thank you for being here.”

James looked at her. He had never seen Lily so pale. He wasn't sure if it was because of the blood she lost or if she was depressed and sick from the delivery. He reached for her hand and squeezed it. “I'd never stay at Hogwarts knowing that you'd be here alone.”

“No,” Lily said, her voice sounding so monotone. She didn't look at James, but continued to look at their joined hands. “Thank you for being there for me the entire time. Since almost day one,” she blinked away a few tears. “You've been there for me, and you saved my life. You were with me the last time I was here, having a panic attack, and you've just been...Last year I was so mean to you. I hated you to be honest, because you had the emotional capacity of a teaspoon, and here we are...” She couldn't finish. James wrapped his arms around her, holding her. It was a bit awkward holding her from the chair, so he slowly stood up and sat on her bed.

Lily hastily wiped at her eyes with her free hand. She shifted, wincing slightly. “I'll understand if you think this is the end of us-”

“Lily!” James hissed, looking at her. “Why would you think this? Unless...unless you want it to be,” he whispered, his voice shaking. He couldn't imagine living one day without Lily by his side, knowing that she was his and no one else's. He let go of her so he could shift to see her better.

“This is my fault James-”

"No it's not." James lifted her chin. He was shocked to see her eyes full of remorse. "I don't know the whole process of what happened, but it wasn't you. You didn't reach inside of yourself to do this. This didn't happen because you eat cheese in your oatmeal or onions with your eggs. Please Lily, don't blame this on yourself." He leaned down and kissed her forehead. When he pulled away, Lily stroked his cheek. She didn't say anything for several minutes, more than likely trying to digest what he said. For the past four days she was blaming this on herself. She couldn't figure out an excuse as to why this could happen, she couldn't find a way to explain why the baby was born the way she was, with the umbilical cord around her neck.

"I love you." The words tumbled out of Lily's mouth before she could stop them. James leaned down and kissed her.

"I love you too. Love you more than anything in the world." He pulled away and leaned his forehead against hers. "We're going to make it through this."

"I don't feel 17 anymore." Lily brushed her hand across her eyes. "I feel so old. I'm in school still."

"I know what you mean." James tucked a strand of hair behind Lily's ears. "But...I don't know...I can't think of anything to say anymore." He pulled away and looked at Lily. "Are you sure you're doing okay? You haven't slept much, and I'd hate to see you get sick after all this."

"I'm making due," Lily sighed and leaned against her pillows. "You know...I just want news about the baby. They haven't been telling us much-"

"Speak of the devil," James whispered. Lily sat up and looked at Madame Jacobs. She was walking in the room slowly, hands shoved in her pockets. She had tears in her eyes, and the breath that Lily had was gone. Just by the expression on her face, Lily knew it was bad news. She tried to hide, to ignore what Madame Jacobs was saying, and it seemed to work. She focused all her attention on the foot of the bed, and when she looked up again, James was crying.

James Potter was crying.

Lily wasn't sure what she felt. Relief? Anguish? Her daughter, the little being that she was carrying a week ago. She was gone. She never believed this would happen. She had prayed, she hoped, she did so many things, wanting her little girl to survive. Lily tried to hold the fat tears that were welling up in her eyes back, but they rolled down her cheeks. She felt as if she were just stabbed in the chest, over and over again. She closed her eyes, trying to stop the pain, she wanted to go back in time to a week ago. She would have lived in Madame Pomfrey's office, having her care for her the entire time, just to have her back.

She never even got to hold her.

Lily gripped the blanket in her hands tightly. She heard James say her name, brokenly, but she couldn't bring herself to look up, look up and see his distress. His anguish. He said her name again, but she shook her head wildly. She wanted to shout, she wanted to scream. Let the entire world know how much she was feeling. She just lost her baby.

Her little girl.

"I want to hold her," Lily demanded, scrubbing at her face. The tears wouldn't stop. Her face felt hot and she felt terrible. She rubbed at her face again.

"She's here." Lily looked up at James. "She's in my arms Lily, and she's so small."

Almost immediately James offered the baby to Lily. Lily shakily held her in her arms, sucking in a breath. For a moment, she couldn't see anything, and as her vision focused she saw the little red head in her arms. Her skin was a light pink with a bluish tinge. "Her little hands...her little feet. These were the feet that were kicking me James," Lily whispered, sobbing. She couldn't bring herself to say anything else. James nodded his head, taking a deep breath. He wrapped his arm around Lily and she leaned against him.

"I know this is going to sound awful," James whispered, placing a kiss on Lily's temple. "But I'm glad she didn't suffer long."

"She didn't." Lily held her baby against her, trying to stop the tears. "I wish this wasn't happening. I wish she was crying and hungry and I was nervous and about to feed her for the first time." James stroked Lily's back. She felt as if her entire world had crashed around her shoulders. For the better part of a year she had been pregnant, revolving her life around her baby, around James, around everything, and she knew she was going to have to start all over again.

There was a knock at the door and Lily looked up. It was the healer who had brought her in. "What's her name?" James whispered, trying to hold onto her for just a moment longer.

"Mary Anne," Lily said automatically. "It's been in the back of my mind for awhile now."

"Mary Anne Evans," James whispered, touching the baby.

"Mary Anne Evans-Potter," Lily corrected. She knew the healer was walking towards them, wanting the baby back, but Lily wanted to hold onto as many minutes as she could. After several more seconds, Lily tore her eyes away from Mary Anne. The healer was standing beside the bed, giving them as much time as they needed. "Goodbye," Lily whispered. She kissed her on her small head and watched as James did the same thing. He whispered something, something Lily didn't hear, and then he carefully handed Mary Anne to the healer. Lily couldn't help but smile when James told her to be careful.

"That was hard," James whispered, looking at Lily. He knew that talking about it was good, but it was just so hard. Lily tucked her head underneath his chin and hugged him fiercely. "I felt her kicking, and she was kicking hard." He heard Lily mumbled I know against his chest. He wrapped his arms around her and hugged her tightly. Never, not through the entire pregnancy did he think something like this would happen. Of course he feared the normal things that any parent would fear, but death? He never imagined it.

"We have to have a funeral," Lily whispered. She pulled away from James. James leaned away from her, grabbing tissues. He gave some to Lily and blew his own nose. After wiping away his tears and throwing away their tissues, he returned to the bed and sat down.

"I know where," James said. "In the cemetery off of Hogsmeade. That's where my parents are...All the Potters actually." He ran a hand through his hair, and Lily gave him a sidelong glance. He smiled a little bit, she still didn't like it when he did that. "If that's okay with you of course."

"It's fine with me."

"Good."

James grabbed her hand. "We're going to get through this. Together."

"I know," Lily said, staring at their joined hands. "Together. Forever." She looked at James. He nodded his head and smiled. Even though his heart was broken for his daughter, for Lily, for everyone around him, he felt a little warmth in knowing that Lily was going to still be at his side.

xoXoXoXox

Epilogue

Harry sat back, his tea forgotten. Remus looked like he was going to cry, and he was hastily wiping at his eyes. For a long time neither person said anything, Harry's voice caught in his throat and Remus trying to compose himself. Remus ran a hand through his hair and then cleared his throat. "Like I said, your mother was a very peculiar person."

"Calm," Harry said. "Very calm."

Remus nodded his head. He pushed away his mug of tea and leaned back in his chair, staring at Harry. Harry looked down into his mug, staring at the dark liquid. It was cold by now, not even warm enough to drink. Harry sucked in a breath and then looked back at Remus. "I'm sorry about barging in here earlier."

"I don't blame you. I know I or Sirius should have told you the story, but it's always been hard to talk about. It was a very difficult time in your parents life, and it affected all of us."

It was quiet for several minutes between them. Remus picked up his mug of tea and took Harry's tea. He put the mugs away in the sink and began milling around for something to eat. He asked Harry if he was hungry, but Harry declined. He didn't have an appetite at the moment. To make conversation Remus asked, "How're Ron and Hermione?"

"Good," Harry said, looking up at his hands, glad that he had something to talk about. "Ron woke up yesterday, and Hermione's being Hermione, fussing over him."

"Kind of like Molly?"

"Almost exactly like her, but Ginny's just as bad," Harry said, laughing a bit. "Probably worse, she's been influenced more by Mrs. Weasley than Hermione."

"It's easy to be influenced by Molly," Remus said, walking back into the dining room. He had a small plate of crisps. He offered Harry some until he took a few for himself. They ate in silence, allowing

their small conversation to turn over in their minds. Harry began forming questions in his mind, knowing that Remus wouldn't mind answering them. He wiped his hands on his trousers and looked back at Remus. He seemed to be studying Harry's face.

"Where's Elizabeth?" Harry asked, knowing that the was probably the most unpleasant question. He realized it was when Remus grimaced.

"She died before Lily and James did, right before they went into hiding actually. Voldemort found her, and she refused to say anything about your parents. He left her for the Death Eaters, the bloody-"

"Remus, are you hungry?"

Harry jumped. Tonks walked in, dusting her hands off on her clothes. She noticed the half eaten crisps on his plate and shook her head. "That is not a meal, and I'm starving, so you better be hungry. Harry, are you hungry?"

"Not really Tonks," Harry said, looking up at Remus's very pregnant wife. She smiled at him.

"I'll make you something anyway."

"Actually Tonks, I was getting ready to leave. I have some business to attend to."

"You sound so grown up," Tonks said, patting Harry's head. "I still think you could use a bit of food. You're all skin and bones!" Tonks walked into the kitchen. Remus lifted an eyebrow at Harry, as if he were saying, *I told you so*.

Harry stood up. "I'll see you later Remus." He walked around the table and embraced Remus in a hug. It was a bit strange to hug him, but it felt good at the same time. Remus patted his back and smiled at him.

"If you have any questions, stop by any time."

"I will." Harry walked to the front door. "Bye Tonks!"

“Bye Harry! Take care, and keep an eye on Ron and Hermione!”

“Will do,” Harry repeated. He waved at Remus halfheartedly and then left the house. He stood on the porch for a moment, just taking a deep breath. Then he looked up. The sky was clear, no signs of the earlier rain. Harry patted his clothes. They weren’t that damp anymore. He walked off the porch, pulling his wand out in the process. He disappeared with a flick of his wand.

He landed lightly on his feet in the middle of Hogsmeade. It was the late afternoon and there were no witches or wizards milling about this time. It looked like Madame Rosmerta left, there were no lights on and no cleaning. Harry shoved his hands in his pockets and walked through Hogsmeade. It was a bit strange walking through here two times in one day, but he knew he had things to do. Again he was making his way to Williams Shop of Flowers. This time the older man wasn’t sweeping. He was inside his shop and it looked like he was getting ready to close up for the day. Harry started out at a jog and ran to the store. The man looked at Harry, smiling.

“Sir, can I have some more flowers? I’ll pay this time,” Harry said, skidding to a halt in front of the counter. The wizard smiled at Harry, nodding his head.

“Anything for you Mr. Potter.” He went back to the back room, returning with a dozen and a half red roses. Harry didn’t even need to ask for how many he needed. He shoved his hand in his pocket, pulling out a few galleons. He checked the price of the flowers, relieved that the price wasn’t going to be over a few galleons. When he had the roses safely in his hand he gave the wizard the money and backed out of the store, not asking for the change.

He pivoted at the doorway and ran to the dirt path. His heart was beating quickly and he knew that the day wasn’t even over and he was ready for bed. A long day with a long story could do that to a person.

He slowed down once he got on the dirt path. He held the roses in one hand and kept his wand at the ready with the other. He read the Potter’s Cemetery sign as he entered and walked through the headstones. He sat down in front of the smallest headstone and just

thought for several minutes. *'Just think, if you would've made it, I'd have a sister. I'd really have a sister.'* He dusted off the headstone, there was ivy growing on it. Then he put twelve roses on her grave.

For the first time in years, Harry thought, no he knew, he was relieved. He felt...okay. It was okay to him that his parents were gone...not okay, but he was at peace. Sirius's grave should have been there, and Harry knew for sure if Remus died the next day, *'Merlin forbid'*, then the last Marauder would be buried there too.

Harry dropped his head into his hands and sat still for a while. His mind drifted to his mother and father, his sister, his grandparents, and everyone in between. He had no idea that his mother had a baby in Hogwarts, he was surprised that none of the Professor's mentioned it to him. *'McGonagall especially.'*

When Harry noticed that it was getting dark out, he stood up. Dusting off his pants again, he gave one last look at his family's graves before leaving the cemetery. He apparated by the sign back to St. Mungo's.

He still had six roses and he traveled through St. Mungo's with a bit of a bounce in his step. He went directly to Ron's room, not dillydallying a bit. He reached Ron's room in record time and was proud when he threw open the door. Ron was sitting up in his bed for the first time. He looked a bit uncomfortable, but Hermione was rubbing his arm. Harry grinned at them and saw Ginny sitting in a chair, the Daily Prophet in her lap, forgotten. They all had been startled at the door being opened like that.

Harry presented Ginny with four roses. He kissed her and then gave Ron and Hermione one.

"I guess everything went well," Hermione said, eyebrow arched but a smile on her face.

"I have some news," Harry said, going to the door and shutting it.

"You're a poof?" Ron asked, examining the rose. His voice was a bit weak, but other than that he seemed fine. "I'm not that way Harry, but I'll keep the flower."

Harry laughed and pulled a chair up to Ron's bed. He pulled Ginny along with him and she dragged her chair behind her. With his best friends and girlfriend around him, he retold the story of his parents and sister.

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